

Plans Scams & Vans

An A-TEAM fanzine

Issue #3

Printed January 1997

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PLANS SCAMS & VANS 3 is also available in Adobe Acrobat, electronic format. For information on obtaining an electronic copy, email pellegrini@eniac.seas.upenn.edu or write to Nicole Pellegrini, 2429 Locust Street #315, Philadelphia PA 19103.

CONTENTS NOTICE: The Fan-Fiction Index and "An A-Team Christmas" were originally published on the Internet. All other materials are appearing in print for the first time.

The Son of the Jazz Strikes Back

Just about two years ago this month, after receiving a package around Christmas-time containing my first stash of A-Team 'zines and fan-fic from a wonderful, gracious person (who shall gain Sainthood someday if I have any say in the matter), I first tossed around the idea of doing a brand new A-Team 'zine. What I read, and suddenly realizing that OTHER people actually were interested in continuing the adventures of our Team, were all I needed to finally set some of my own ideas to paper - or, more accurately, computer screen. With the help of few (very few!) other writers and die-hard fans, we pulled together Plans Scams & Vans #1, not sure if we'd ever get enough material to do a #2, or if there would even be any interest in it. About nine months later we did, now having the full momentum of the internet mailing list behind us, some word of mouth, and a few new writers taking their first stabs at fan-fic. About six months later there was The A-Files, a crazy idea about A-Team/X-Files crossovers that has turned into our biggest success so far. Now, as I'm writing this note, this issue is overflowing with great contributions and PSV#4 is almost half-full without my even trying too hard to push for contributors (or getting the chance to write myself! Though I still admit to being in some recuperation after A-Files. . .)

Therefore, I have to say that A-Team fandom is more than alive and kicking, but it's growing (thanks to fX and other stations around the world suddenly re-airing the program) and getting better every day. So I see no reason to think that this 'zine series won't last to see at least another three issues, and then some, with the specialty issues we're planning now in the future (see the back-pages for details.)

This issue also introduces a new format for PSV, something which I will be using from this point forward hopefully in all Sockii Press 'zines. Now, all our 'zines will be available in either standard print format, or electronically. Both formats will include identical material - all art work, all formatting, etc., will be the same. I am offering this choice in formats so that

1) Many more people with internet access and possibly limited financial means can have cheap(er) and easy access to these stories.

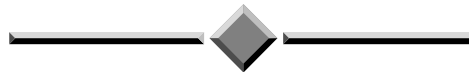
2) Those who are either without computer access or just prefer "paper" 'zines have the option to still purchase a print version if they wish.

3) This editor hopefully saves high print-run costs, while still offering quality, edited and proofread materials.

I hope you enjoy the fiction, information and fun you'll find within these pages. I want to hear from all of you about what you especially enjoyed, and what could be improved. Each issue we live and learn. Now, I've got a research proposal that's demanding my attention, so I'll be off.

Your friend through the insanity,

Nicole



~~proof~~Proofreading assistance provided by: Rhonda Eudaly, Pat Lillich, Liz Meinert, Denise Messer. *Thanx muchachas!*

Background noises provided by WDRE FM, Rush, the Beatles, and my *UFOs Tonite!* tapes.

SPECIAL THANKS TO . . .

My "mugs" and meddlesome friends, notably Blue Dog and Dave "Tristan" Ward, for the willing ears and overflowing inboxes they put up with last year during the bad days. Finer friends can't be found!

Rhonda for providing constant email fixes, knowing the importance of appreciating certain finer things (and people) in life, and all the ideas, stories, schemes, etc. We're getting there!

Don Ecker, one of the coolest dudes around. I'm watchin' the skies now!

And of course the whole ON THE JAZZ crew - *THE BEST DANG MAILING LIST ON THE INTERNET!*

If you have a problem, maybe you can contact...the editor!

The following is a collection of notes of comment on our past publications. I welcome and encourage your input so that I can share them with our writers and hopefully improve on future publications' quality.

COMMENTS ON PSV#1

Hey, it finally came! Three cheers for the USPS for successfully delivering a package intact, and only taking a week to do it. I just skimmed the first story, but I like it. You do really well with dialogue, making it sound natural not stilted. Gotta run more later.

-I-

(in a later email...)

So, despite the best intentions, I couldn't just let PSV1 wait until I got home tonight to read it. Somehow or other it snuck out of my briefcase onto my desk, and instead of scholarly articles on network models of neurodevelopmental disorders I found myself happily immersed in the much more interesting stories therein. I *really* enjoyed "Special Assignment." Very . . . poignant I guess, though that's not really the word I'm looking for. Happy endings are always good.

-I-

Nicole, or Sockii, or at least one of the team -

Anyway, I just received "Plans, Scams, and Vans #1" yesterday and, to quote my favorite colonel: "Nice!" By far one of my favorite fanzines of all time, though I'm not sure how appreciative my college teachers will be if they find out I spent an entire evening indulging in reading instead of working on speeches and homework and presentations (why do I feel I should throw in an "Oh, my!" now?) Anyway, I had to drop a quick message and pass along kudos and praises. Especially loved "Special Assignment" . . . I've already read it three times (and will probably read it several hundred more times!) Glad to hear about the plans for the archive, hope it comes together (sorry, I couldn't help myself). Also, the Homepage and the Web-O-Rama sites are great . . . hours of fun! Anyway, I'm looking forward (when finances permit) to reading PSV #2 & 3, and the "A-Files."

Also, if you know anyone who's still looking for the A-Team books #1-10, or the activity book, put them in touch with "Intergalactic Trading Company" in Longwood, Florida. Tel #1-800-383-0727, e-mail: 103327.2625@Compuserve.Com. They have a stock (I don't know how big a stock, though) of these books on sale this month. I'm

also tearing through my catalog collections to find out if Script City in Hollywood is still doing business . . . last catalog I received was offering scripts from the "A-Team", including two unfiled episodes. Will let you know if and when I find out anything.

Thanks again! Keep the birds' nests out of the engines and remember that sea monsters must be green because iridescent purple looks bad on-screen.

C.M.N.

Okay, I stayed up last night and finished PSV#1. There was one story I couldn't finish, but the rest was okay. And hey, if those were your first attempts at writing, are you sure you're in the right business? At least you got the characters right. "Special Assignment" was pretty cool, though next time I read it, it might not be right before going to sleep. Then again maybe not.

I'm working my way through PSV#2. I liked the POW story until it got to the MASH part. It was a great idea, except they were in Korea and Henry Blake more or less died in 1953. But it was a good story. I'm looking forward to going through the rest of it.

-R.E.

. . . Also wanted to make mention of the content. This was not your average A-Team 'zine. Most of the editors I ran into preferred stuff like hurt/comfort or romance over straight humor. Also you're the first 'zine I know of to run a Star Trek/A-Team cross. There may have been others in the works, but this is the first time I've seen one published. And as I mentioned before, I haven't run into a lot of Murdock/Amy romances. So, I definitely think the 'zine wasn't your average A-Team fair.

Keep in touch. Keep up the good work on your 'zines. Looking forward to PSV #2.

Laura

COMMENTS ON PSV #2

Just got the 'zine in the mail today. (No, I haven't read it yet. Just got it five minutes ago.) The illos came out great. Was very impressed by your drawings and of course the scanned stuff always looks good. Also looks like a great job of typesetting. And it looks bigger than 1st issue so with any luck the 'zine will keep growing and be around for a while. Now I just have to find the time to sit down and read everything. You did a gorgeous job on the 'zine.

May all your plans come together.
Laura

COMMENTS ON THE A-FILES

Just finished THE A-FILES. Loved it! Want more! You wouldn't think The A-Team and X-Files would work that well together, but they do. Congrats!

m.f.
[Well, if people have more A-Team/X-Files story ideas, I'll happily do another issue, and maybe even pull together a sequel to my own story from the first issue. Stranger things have happened... Ed.]

Hi Sockii!
Finished reading "The A-Files" this morning--I REALLY enjoyed it! I thought all of the stories were great and they were well written.

See Ya,
Denise

...well, I read A-Files, and loved it. Your story was great! You should write professionally, you really should. I especially loved all the "little bits" that you throw in (like "Do I look like a George?" & "Dwight's worse than Harrison!")

-liz

Thanks for getting my copy to me so fast. I read it all last night and loved it.

Jana

Well, it's taken me awhile to send my kudos for PSV #2 and The A-Files, but I'm sure you understand how the rush of the holidays, finals at college, not to mention keeping a wary eye on the California skies hoping not to be flooded can

occupy one's time...Anyway, I know it's horrible to write stories and not hear any kind of reaction (especially when the reaction is good!), so I finally made myself sit down and type out a note!

First, I said PSV #1 was one of my favorite fanzines. Add PSV #2 and the A-Files to that list. Nice work one and all!

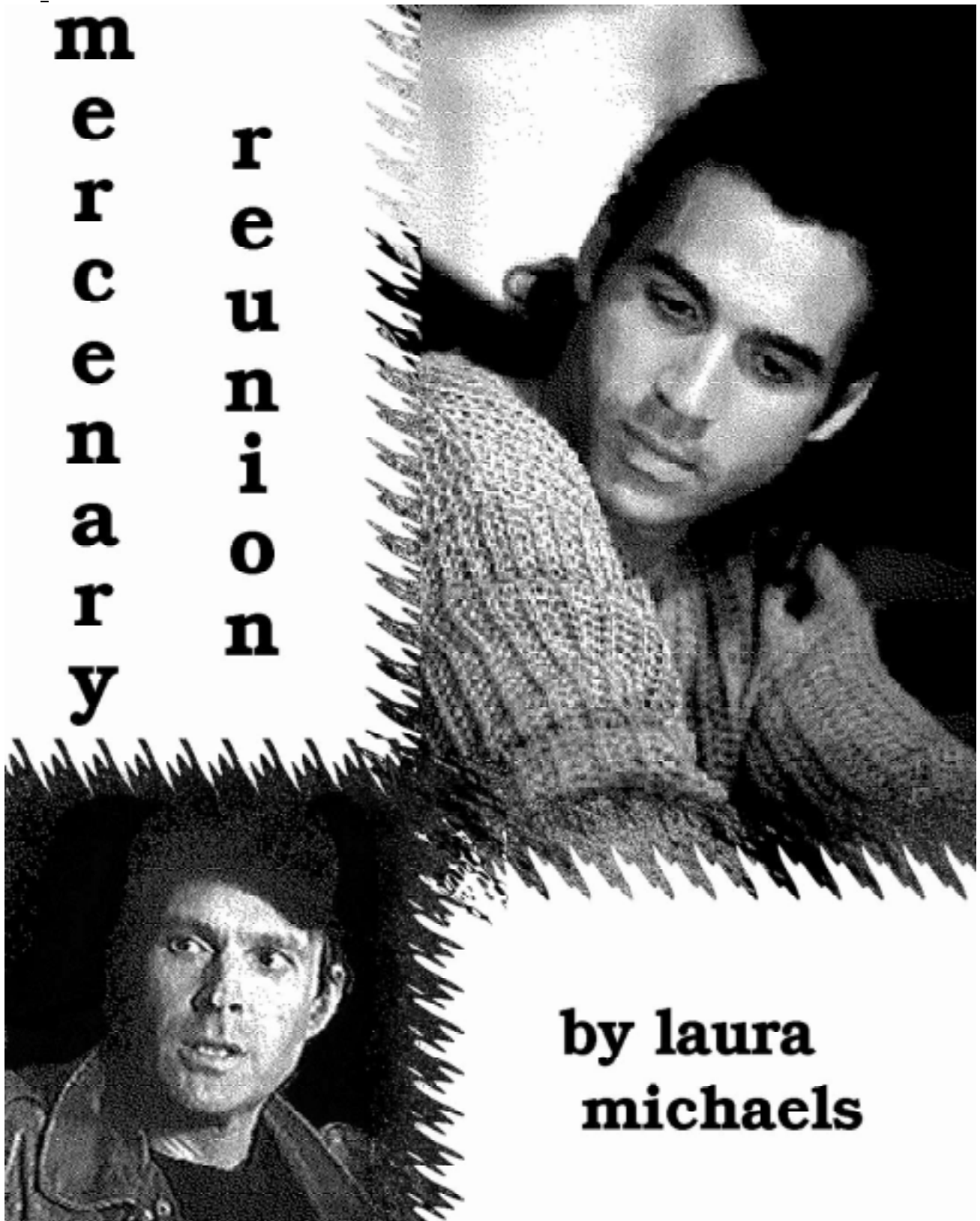
Re: Editor's "ramblings"---you can never have too much "mushy romance", especially if it involves Murdock. I still consider "Special Assignment" one of my favorite stories of any fanzine. Re: "Shadows and Stars"--by chance, Dwight's episode of Babylon Five is the only episode I've seen. What a great idea making the futuristic team. I read your sample from the next story and I'm looking forward to reading it. Re: "Through the Thin Veil" - The great thing about a character like Murdock is that, even if they had told us he was the one who killed Morrison, you just wouldn't care! You'd still love him anyway. P.S.--thanks for getting rid of Cancer Man, the guy's getting on my nerves anyway! Re: "Strange Bedfellows" - I'm still chuckling at the image of the guys toddling about in a UFO. As if they can't wreck enough havoc in a van. Knowing Murdock, their next stop after talking to Stockwell was probably the drive-thru window at Hamburger Heaven (just to see the look on the clerk's face. Re: "Agenda"- Pass the tissues! Mom's a die-hard X-Files/Mulder fan, so I had to hide this story from her. Still, nice work. Re: "Out of the Frying Pan" - had my full attention, trust me! Love that ending! It was exactly what Hannibal would have done on the t.v. series. Re: "Missing" - my friend the die-hard Dirk Benedict fan thanks you for the story (In fact, I've had to keep my eye on her, lest my PSV 'zines turn up missing....) Good stuff! Re: "A Team to Steele" - RS/A-Team cross-over? Good idea! Re: "Hacking Away at the System" - I can see Murdock at the base of that statue now.... Particularly liked the supporting characters (Janet, Lou, etc..) in this one. Not everyone can handle people talking to invisible dogs in stride, after all. Re: "The Lady" - never saw Airwolf, but I enjoyed the story anyway. Especially the parting shot about B.A. and Murdock copying the blueprints. Re: "Closet Full of Skeletons" - nice banter between the guys! Nice work. Re: "A-Team of Space" - Harrison Ford and Dirk Benedict together on screen? I'd certainly be glued to my t.v.!

Well, that's probably a long enough "short note". Anyway, I just wanted to pass along some praise for the hard work. Thanks for letting me bend your ear! World without end, adios!

C.M. Nutting

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**by laura
michaels**

Richie looked up from his paperwork in the office to spot some strange guy hanging around the dojo. The man was wearing an unusual backpack and was examining various sections of the wall with a magnifying glass.

Richie left the office to talk to him. "This is a private dojo." He remembered Charlie using a line like that often and hoped it would be enough to get rid of the intruder.

The man put his finger to his lips in a hushing motion then angled the magnifier to study a couple of katanas on the wall. "Early seventeenth century," he said.

"You a collector?" Richie asked.

"Ghostbuster," the man replied.

"Ghostbuster?"

The man just nodded and headed off to examine something else.

Richie followed. "There's no such thing as ghosts. Everyone knows that."

"That's what the government wants you to believe. The truth is out there." The man made a sweeping gesture with his hand, indicating the extent of the dojo.

"Okay," Richie replied in an unsure voice. *This man is crazy.* "I'm just gonna go get Mac." He pointed to an intercom by the freight elevator.

The man heard the name Mac and angled the magnifying glass to stare at Richie.

Richie backed away slowly and headed for the intercom. He activated the device. "Mac, we got a real nut case here."

"With a sword?" the worried reply came back over the intercom.

"No, just a magnifying glass," Richie replied.

"Well you should be able to handle one nut case with a magnifying glass, Richie. After all, what's the worst thing he can do to you?"

"Mac."

"It's good experience."

"Mac!"

"I'm busy right now," MacLeod replied.

"Thanks for nothing."

Richie walked away from the intercom, but was still in range to hear Mac's final reply. "You're welcome."

Richie returned to the man who currently had his magnifier directed at a weight machine. Again the man angled the magnifier to observe Richie's reactions. "Well?"

"Well what?" asked Richie.

"You talk to . . . Mac?"

"Yes," Richie said.

"I knew it!" The man grabbed his backpack and started looking for something. He mumbled

to himself as he went through what looked like a lot of junk and some camping gear. Richie only caught a few words. He thought he could make out, "sonic screwdriver" and "now where is my proton accelerator?"

Richie started backing away again. Maybe he should call 911. Richie nearly backed up into his friend. The kid looked pretty rattled as he turned around to see Duncan MacLeod behind him.

"Mac. I thought you were busy."

"And I thought I'd double check if you were responsible enough to handle the situation properly."

"I was just going to call 911," Richie told MacLeod. "That guy is certifiable."

The man overheard Richie's comment. "Am not. I have my walking papers and everything. They're in here somewhere." He started checking through the junk in the backpack even more earnestly.

"Murdock?" Duncan MacLeod asked in surprise. "What are you doing here?"

Murdock picked up the magnifier, walked over and aimed it in Duncan's face. "Looking for ghosts."

"Ghosts," said Richie sarcastically. "See, I told you he was crazy."

"A particular ghost named MacLeod to be exact," Murdock explained.

"Well as you can see . . ." Richie pointed to the magnifying glass. "Mr. MacLeod is very much alive."

Duncan realized Richie was trying to protect him. He also knew Murdock could take some getting used to at times. "Richie, it's all right. Murdock and I are old friends."

Murdock tentatively extended a hand to touch Duncan MacLeod. He seemed shocked and disappointed his hand didn't go through Duncan. "If you're MacLeod, then who did your father fight with in the war."

"The French resistance."

Murdock nodded. "You're MacLeod. Now where did I leave that proton accelerator?"

Richie seemed alarmed, but Duncan just smiled in amusement. "You haven't changed, Murdock."

Murdock looked him up and down carefully. "Neither have you . . . except for the hair, of course."

"So what are you doing here, besides looking for ghosts? Don't tell me you're a friend of Charlie DeSalvo."

"DeSalvo's here?" Murdock asked, surprised.

"Well it does say DeSalvo's on the outside wall in big letters."

"Where is good old Charlie?" asked Murdock.

"The Balkans."

"Really? How is he?"

"Fine last I heard," MacLeod said. "What are you doing here?"

"I told you. Looking for ghosts."

"You want to come in my office and tell me about it?" Duncan offered.

"Fine. I'll just take care of the dojo bills later," Richie said, obviously annoyed at the unexpected intrusion.

"Why not?" Murdock replied.

Duncan showed Murdock to his office. Richie followed. He quickly grabbed some papers so he could make a hurried exit. Murdock interrupted Richie before he could succeed.

"You seen Billy?"

Richie shook his head and left. He closed the door on his way out.

"What ghosts?" asked MacLeod.

Murdock closed the blinds on the office window as if the whole issue were top secret, then sat down again. "Well, I remember a certain Duncan MacLeod. Died a big hero in Nam. Played decoy while we rescued the children in the village during an attack. Saw him take several rounds from the chopper."

"Maybe I'm a fast healer," said MacLeod.

"If you're that fast a healer, why lay low afterwards? We never saw you again. No, if *you* were Duncan MacLeod, you'd have found a way to tell your buddies you were all right. You're MacLeod's ghost. Ghosts have ethereal restrictions on where they haunt and stuff. Like maybe you can only show yourself around old war antiques. Like maybe those old katanas out there."

"Murdock. It's me. I got reassigned. That's all."

"Well the army has that particular Duncan MacLeod listed as dead."

"So *maybe* it was a top secret mission," MacLeod replied.

"Maybe," Murdock answered, unsure.

"How's the Team?" MacLeod asked.

"Like *you* care."

"I heard they were in trouble with the government. I don't always manage to keep a low profile around the police, especially these days. I thought it would be dangerous for all of us if I started asking questions."

"That trouble with the government stuff is old news," Murdock said.

"About twenty years old," MacLeod added.

"No. I mean they got off."

"The government cut a deal?"

"Yeah. We're doing covert operations for a

general named Stockwell. Few more missions and we'll be *totally* in the clear. Though knowing Hannibal, he'll probably convince the Team to stay on and keep doing missions. Stockwell knows it too or he'd probably still be trying to blackmail us into working for him another ten years. Hannibal's really been on the jazz lately trying to get the missions done for Stockwell and still outsmart the general at his own game. It's like watching a chess match between those two. Wheels within wheels."

"What about Face and B.A.? Don't they want to retire and have families?"

"Eventually. B.A.'s getting a good government pension when this is all over and he's making enough money to help out his mom. Face. Well, you know Face. It keeps him out of jail. Besides, they get off on the jazz too, you know. Though sometimes they don't always admit it."

"And what about you? The newspapers never mentioned you in connection with the A-Team except as their pilot in Nam."

"Man's gotta go with his unit." MacLeod waited for Murdock to say more. Murdock finally decided to. "I was in the V.A. Crazy."

"I know. I read that much."

"I'm okay now. Got my walking papers and everything." That was all Murdock seemed inclined to offer on the subject.

"Any retirement plans?"

"Got a girl. Kelly. She's a veterinarian."

"Congratulations. So are you two . . . ?"

"Someday. Right now, I try to visit her between missions sometimes. She doesn't live too close now. Me and Billy moved to Langley, Virginia when the Team started working for Stockwell." Murdock seemed lost in thought then snapped out of it and added, "Like I said, a man's got to go with his unit." He lost his serious tone and asked, "You met Billy?"

"Billy? That was the dog you talked about in Nam."

Murdock nodded.

"I don't think I've had the pleasure," MacLeod said.

"Billy!" Murdock called. "He's around *here* somewhere." Murdock looked around. "You seen him?"

MacLeod shook his head.

"Well he's my bestest buddy and he's about . . ." Murdock motioned with his hand. ". . . Yay big."

Murdock's hand had started at about Toy Fox Terrier height and ended up at somewhere between Rottweiler and Sheepdog height. *That's very informative.* But then Murdock was usually about as informative. "So how did you find me?" MacLeod changed the subject.

"We were back in California for a mission. Ran into Kermit. He mentioned spotting you at an antiques convention in the city a few months ago."

"Kermit?"

"Guy with the green glasses."

"Was he in Nam?"

"Mercenary. Actually a friend of a friend of Stockwell's. Or maybe I should say Rykker. Kermit told us General Stockwell does a little moonlighting as a mercenary himself. He's got quite a record in the business. Kermit and Face and me, we found records on him going back all the way to some weird world spy organization called the U.N.C.L.E."

"Your boss has quite a history," MacLeod said.

"Bet it's not as interesting as yours. So what's it like on the other side? I saw 'Ghost' forty-two times and they never showed that part."

"Murdock, I'm not dead."

"That's what they all say."

"You've talked to other dead bodies?" MacLeod asked, worried.

Murdock raised his eyebrow. His expression gave the impression he was asking, "you've got to be kidding."

MacLeod tried to rephrase the question. "Have any other dead bodies answered back?"

"See, you admit it. You said '*other* dead bodies.' You are dead."

"I'm not dead, Murdock."

"Then what are you?"

"Immortal."

"No. Hannibal's immortal. You're dead."

"Hannibal's just plain crazy."

"No. I'm crazy," Murdock replied, defensively.

"I thought you said you had your walking papers."

"Well, I was crazy. If anybody knows crazy, I know crazy."

"Murdock, why did you come here?" Duncan kept wondering if the visit was strictly for old times sake or if Murdock had run into another Immortal and possibly needed his help.

"Just came to visit an old war buddy."

"That's it? Just a social call?"

Murdock nodded.

"I'm touched."

"Even if he is a ghost," Murdock said.

"I'm not a ghost."

"I got a message from B.A. for you. Beyond-the-grave type stuff. B.A. says if you were alive . . . He didn't think you were alive. . . . If you were alive, the A-Team owes you one for 'helpin' out them kids'." Murdock tried to imitate B.A.'s tone on the last part.

"What'd Hannibal say about it?"

"He said you were dead. But Face and Billy and me, we knew better. Besides, if B.A. says we owe you one, we owe you one. Nobody argues with B.A. about jobs."

"And if I ever try to collect, will I shock everyone?"

"Shock them to death, but if B.A. says we owe you one . . ."

"I know, you owe me. I'll keep it in mind if I ever have need of your particular expertise."

"So. You're out of the business?" asked Murdock

"Fighting?"

Murdock nodded.

"Got involved in a different kind of fight. Nothing you guys would want to get involved in."

"A Private Little War'."

"You could say that."

"Didn't think you could leave the jazz behind so easily. You got it bad as Hannibal. You remember the time you walked in front of that machine gun."

"Yes," MacLeod said.

"Well at least one of us does. It's still all just a big blur to me. I went to bed with one hell of a hangover."

"Yeah, but you had a great time."

"Did I?" asked Murdock.

"They had some very good liquor for that area of the country . . . and some great women."

"So tell me. Was it just me . . . or did you have a hangover too?"

"I had a bit of a hangover too if I remember correctly."

"And did you wake up able to speak Chinese?"

"Yes."

"Wasn't that a weird experience? You know . . . sort of supernatural. Like an alien abduction or something and they shove all those Chinese words into your brain."

"No. Not really. I already knew how to speak Chinese. You must have really been drunk. You don't remember Hsui Tai and me teaching you some Chinese words. She made us rice for dinner . . ."

"And then we got really plastered," Murdock recalled.

Duncan nodded.

"So she was Chinese?" Murdock asked, surprised, realization only now dawning on him.

Duncan nodded again. "You only now noticed?"

"I was kind of out of it at the time."

"Yeah, it certainly sounds like you were."

"So you don't have any really *bizarre*, strange and unexplained war stories?" asked

Murdock.

"Besides taking all those rounds in that rescue mission and living to tell about it?"

Murdock nodded.

"No."

"Come on. There must've been something weird you've experienced. Maybe a hidden Martian invasion in your background or some ghost stories or something?"

MacLeod shook his head.

"You always were a disbeliever. How 'bout your father? No ghost war stories from France?"

"Nope." A huge grin appeared on MacLeod's face. "There was a vampire once."

"I knew it. I knew it. I knew it." Murdock dug out a notepad and pen from his backpack. "Tell me all about it."

"It turned out to be a hoax."

Murdock closed his pad, disappointed.

MacLeod laughed. "Murdock, there's usually a reasonable explanation for everything."

"You said *'usually.'*"

"Well, I can't always explain everything, but there usually is an explanation . . . if you look for it."

"But *you* can't explain everything."

"Is there an echo in here?" MacLeod teased.

"So you do admit some unexplained phenomena do exist."

"Temporarily unexplained. Yes I admit it."

Murdock pointed at MacLeod like he'd got him. "I'm gonna write this down for posterity." He flipped some pages in his notepad and began writing. "Duncan MacLeod admits there are some unexplained things in this world." He took the pad and pen and brought it in front of MacLeod. "Care to sign it?"

Richie knocked once, then opened the door and let himself in without waiting for a reply. Duncan tensed. It had to be something serious or, from Richie's previous reaction, he wouldn't have gone near Murdock again. Duncan hadn't sensed another Immortal, though. "What is it?" MacLeod asked Richie.

"There's a couple of guys outside. Never saw them around before. Thought I caught a glimpse of one of them carrying a gun."

Murdock peered through the slats that covered the office window. "Kid's good," he told MacLeod. "You want to join the A-Team," Murdock asked Richie.

Richie looked to Mac. He was obviously still worried about Murdock's crazy statements.

MacLeod ignored Richie's unease. "Who are they, Murdock?"

"Looks like some goons we left behind in California. Guess the clean-up crew missed a

few."

"We have to get the . . . 'civilians' out," MacLeod said.

"No problemo. . . . Richie."

MacLeod motioned with his head, Richie should pay attention to Murdock.

Murdock turned around, took a few steps toward the kid and put his hands on Richie's shoulders. "I'm entrusting you with a very important mission. You have some towels?"

"Towels?" asked Richie, confused.

"*Always* know where your towels are," Murdock replied. "Take some towels. Go out and deliver them to the civilians and tell them discreetly to leave. And Richie . . ."

"Yes?"

"Be sure to tell them to leave one at a time. We don't want an obvious rush to the exits."

Richie looked at Mac. MacLeod nodded his approval. Richie was about to leave for his 'mission.' His hand was on the door turning the knob, when Murdock interrupted again.

"And Richie . . ."

Richie waited.

"Get out after the others leave."

Richie nodded and left.

Murdock turned to explain to Mac. "Don't worry about him. They won't be suspicious of a kid."

Doesn't hurt that he's Immortal either. "I should warn you, Murdock. Richie never follows orders when you tell him where to go."

Murdock smiled. "Caught the jazz from you, did he?"

"From me?" MacLeod asked. An expression of innocence was on his face.

"Well you don't see Hannibal around anywhere, do you?" Murdock carefully peered out the window again. "Kid's very good. Think he'll want to join the Team?"

"You have a plan?" asked MacLeod. Murdock had been awfully calm about all this. He was probably up to something.

"Me? A plan? Nah. That's Hannibal's department. I just wing it. You got a plan?"

Duncan wanted to clarify the situation. "Two of them? Armed?"

"Make it three," Murdock said.

"I could try a 'classic half pincer' movement and get their attention while you sneak up on them." The half pincer movement was one of Hannibal's favorite strategies. It was also his military designation for a reckless frontal assault.

"Yes sir." Murdock saluted. "This is like old times."

Duncan left the office trying his best to make himself an obvious target. The dojo was now

empty except for two guys standing not far from the main entrance. Duncan walked up to them. "Hello gentlemen. May I interest you in a membership in the dojo? We have a special rate this time of year."

"Where is he?" one of the men asked.

"Who?" asked MacLeod. "You mean our sales help? Well I realize I'm the owner, but I can still show you around. Those are our weight machines." MacLeod pointed behind and to the right at some equipment. "Just the thing to take off some unwanted pounds. That's our workout mat. Great for falling on." He pointed to the mat behind him in the middle of the floor. "And over there . . ." He pointed to his right, then grabbed the two guys placing an arm across each man's shoulder in what seemed like a friendly and familiar gesture. Duncan made sure they were faced away from the office door. ". . . Upstairs, are the showers. Guaranteed cold water. Sure to cool you off after a hard day's workout."

"Looking for me," Murdock asked from behind.

The two men turned. Duncan managed to grab the arm of the man on the right and twist the gun from his grip as the man brought his weapon up. Then Duncan blocked the aim of the second man with his body and maneuvered for a good sideways kick. Murdock took over where MacLeod left off with the disarmed man. Duncan watched as his friend landed a good solid punch. He in turn landed a good, hard kick to his opponent's chest. Duncan was annoyed and wasn't too bothered about taking his annoyance out on his adversary. *Murdock's winging it, all right. This wasn't the plan.* The man Duncan kicked landed solidly on his back. Duncan went after the gun. He already had it in his hand when Duncan got to him so Duncan's only option was to wrestle it from the guy. As they were fighting Duncan spared a glance in Murdock's direction and noticed he wasn't doing so well. Murdock had gotten off the first punch, but his opponent could obviously punch back. Murdock was moving like someone who was *very* sore.

The guy beneath MacLeod landed a surprise kick to Duncan's shin, hitting a sensitive spot and bringing Duncan's attention back to his own situation. Duncan landed a punch to the man's upper torso then quickly rolled just enough to avoid the gun. A shot went off. Duncan grabbed the gun. He then tossed it across the dojo floor. It skidded several feet, then came to a stop. Three or four punches later, his opponent was out.

Duncan got up, holding his ribs where the man was able to get off a lucky punch of his own. He was all ready to come to Murdock's aid. What he saw instead was Richie and Murdock

standing over the other guy. They obviously had control of the situation.

"You were right, MacLeod. Richie doesn't listen to orders well."

"Sounds like someone else I know," said MacLeod. Duncan wasn't in a very good mood after the fight.

They were interrupted by the click of a gun trigger being pulled back.

Duncan quickly stepped in front of Murdock to protect his friend. He noted Richie was slightly behind and to his side, backing him up.

"End of the line," the third man said from the top of the stairs. The gun was aimed in the direction of the three of them.

"Look!" Murdock interrupted from behind MacLeod. He pointed in the general direction of the man at the top of the staircase. "It's Billy!"

The man with the gun on them didn't move, didn't even blink.

"He's not gonna fall for that old line," Richie said.

Murdock completely ignored the gun centered on them. "I knew I should have put you on your leash." He walked over to his backpack which he must have left by the gym equipment after he'd sneaked out of the office.

Duncan did his best to try to block the shooter's aim, but there wasn't much he could do, given the man's position. Murdock bent down, digging through the backpack. Duncan tried to readjust his position. He tried to gauge the situation. He could charge the man . . . or try to draw his attention away from Murdock.

"Billy!" Murdock pulled out a leash. "Billy, don't do that."

Duncan watched in surprise as the man at the top of the stairs suddenly toppled. He fell down the stairs. When he reached the bottom, Duncan grabbed the fallen gun.

"I told you not to do that," Murdock said. "You knocked that poor man over. Come back here. Billy!" Murdock chased off after Billy. He ran up the stairs, leash in hand.

"We'll just . . ." MacLeod started to yell after Murdock. ". . . clean up here," he finished for Richie's benefit. Murdock was out of sight and probably out of earshot by now.

Murdock peered back down the stairs. "Just call Stockwell and have him send someone over. The number's in the notepad." Murdock pointed to his backpack still on the floor. Then he disappeared after Billy again.

"Get the jump ropes, Richie," MacLeod said. "We'll tie them up 'til Murdock's help arrives."

"At least they'll be good for something," Richie replied.

MacLeod sent a stern look in Richie's

direction. That kid found far too many excuses to shirk his training when it was convenient.

Richie ignored him as he went to retrieve the ropes.

Duncan bent down over Murdock's bag and flipped through the pages. There were all kinds of notes on paranormal and spy stuff in them. He skimmed the notepad, afraid to read what kind of craziness Murdock had discovered and written about. He found an inscription with some names and phone numbers. One of them read "Logan Ross's Uncle Stockwell." *This must be it.*

Richie found Mac in his office, just hanging up the phone.

"Help's on the way."

"You know I was thinking, Mac."

"That's good, Richie," MacLeod teased.

"Seriously, about all that ghost stuff your friend Murdock was talking about . . ."

"Don't tell me you believe in ghosts."

"Did you see a dog at the top of the stairs?"

"I couldn't see clearly below the man's abdomen. Neither could you for that matter. The view was blocked."

"Mac, we both saw that guy fall. There was no dog there."

"You sure?"

"Sure."

"Maybe the guy was clumsy and tripped," MacLeod suggested.

"Or maybe, his dog's a ghost," Richie suggested.

"You've been watching too many horror movies."

"Mac, he didn't just fall down those stairs. Someone . . . some dog must have tripped him."

"Come on, Richie. You're not going to start with this ghost thing too, are you?"

"Then how do you explain what happened to that guy. And don't tell me he tripped himself up."

"Isn't that what usually happens to bad guys? They all trip themselves up in the end." MacLeod grinned.

"Thanks a lot, Mac."

"Look, Murdock's a highly skilled mercenary and an ex-CIA agent. He probably expected something like this was going to happen and set up some kind of trap before those guys showed up. He could have rigged a trip wire upstairs and set it off with something in his backpack."

"You don't really believe that, do you?"

Mac nodded.

"When would he have the time to set up a stunt as elaborate as that?"

"You weren't exactly watching the dojo

every minute now were you, Richie?"

Mac's tone had an accusing edge to it that put Richie on the defensive. "Mac, I couldn't possibly . . ."

"So, Murdock could have planted something when you weren't looking."

Richie walked out of the office to examine the stairs. MacLeod followed him to examine their guests and make sure they were tied securely. When Richie got back from the top of the stairs, he found Mac tightening a knot.

"Well?" asked MacLeod.

"There's nothing up there."

"Murdock's still up there. He's had plenty of time to dismantle anything that might have been there."

"All right. What about the backpack. You see anything in there that looked like a triggering mechanism?"

"Well, I'm not really sure. He has so much junk in there. Besides, he could have taken it with him."

Richie stood and watched as MacLeod examined the ropes on the third man, the man who had fallen. He noted with satisfaction the look of surprise when Mac saw the man's pants leg.

"What do you suppose did that?" Richie asked. A broad smile was on his face. *Now I got you, Mac.*

"He probably ripped it falling down the stairs," MacLeod replied.

Richie was disappointed that Mac had dismissed the evidence so easily. "Or maybe an invisible attack dog got to him." The man's pants leg looked just like it had been torn by a dog's teeth.

"An invisible attack dog?" MacLeod asked.

"Yeah, like a ghost."

"Richie, there's no such thing as ghosts. That's just Murdock. He's always pulling crazy stunts . . ."

"I'm telling you, Mac . . ."

"Telling what?" Murdock interrupted from the top of the staircase.

"You find Billy?" Richie asked.

MacLeod could tell from his interest in the subject his young friend was very curious to see this dog of Murdock's.

"Yes and no," Murdock said. "I found him, but he jumped out the window after a poodle."

"Jumped out the window? You know how many stories up that is?"

"Sounds like an Immortal dog to me," MacLeod teased Richie.

"Who, Billy? No, he's just your average, everyday dog."

"Your average, everyday ghost dog," Richie

mumbled.

"Ghost dog?" Murdock asked, surprised. "Is he crazy?" he asked MacLeod.

MacLeod had an innocent look on his face. "I hope not."

"Billy's as real as you or me," Murdock said.

"Just invisible, right?" asked Richie.

"Only when he doesn't want to be seen. All you gotta do is think white paper. Works every time. Besides, Billy's no ghost. If anyone around here knows ghosts, I do. Like MacLeod for instance . . ."

"You had to start him off again," Mac complained to Richie.

The guy MacLeod had knocked out woke up rather noisily and the three turned to look. He tried to get up and found he couldn't move too well because of the jump ropes.

"Don't worry. You'll be joining your other friends soon," Murdock told him.

The man just glared back in response.

"This is great," Murdock announced. "Just like old times. But something's missing. You know. We oughta have a celebration."

"A celebration?" asked MacLeod.

"Yeah . . . a mercenary party, with the whole Team."

"The whole A-Team?" MacLeod asked.

Murdock nodded. "We could even invite Kermit and all his buddies, Blaisdell, Steadman . . . even that priest guy . . . Kwai Chang. He's not a mercenary, but he's cool. He's like . . . like . . ."

"I know. We've met," MacLeod said.

"And of course, we'd have to invite Stockwell as Rykker."

"Murdock. I don't think now would be such a good time for a party."

"You're right. But we could set it up now. I know. We could have it in Langley. I can just see it. Hannibal can drive Stockwell nuts setting up a party that crashes his security and Stockwell'll come down there all fuming . . . And then we'll spring his invitation on him."

"Murdock, I really don't think . . ."

"Don't worry about it, MacLeod. I can do all the groundwork. Got an in with a catering company. And Face, he can scam anything else we need. Who else should we invite? I know, MacGyver. He's a great guy. Defused bombs during the war. You're really gonna love Mac. I mean Mac, you're going to love Mac. I mean . . . Too many Macs around here, huh?"

Duncan thought of his relative Connor MacLeod. *Good thing Connor's not around.*

"Anyway, you'll love him. Oh and Hawke, he was a pilot in Nam too. Great guy. I'll have to make a list of all this." Murdock grabbed his notepad, which had been left in his backpack,

and started writing furiously. "Anyone you want to invite?"

"Richie," MacLeod replied.

"What?" asked Richie, astonished. "I'm not a vet . . ."

"Wouldn't have him miss it for the world."

A mischievous smile grew on Duncan's face.

"Sure, the more the merrier. Richie'll make a great addition to the A-Team. Anyone else?"

MacLeod enjoyed the fact that Richie looked even more uncomfortable with the idea than he felt. It might be worth going just to see Richie's reaction. That was assuming this wasn't going to be just another one of Murdock's figments of imagination. "I'll get back to you on that."

"Okay. I'll give you a call when it all comes together," Murdock said. "You know, Hannibal loves it . . ."

"When a plan comes together." MacLeod chimed in and the two finished the sentence as one.

"Can I use your phone?" Murdock asked.

"Help yourself."

Murdock headed to the office and closed the door.

"That stuff about the A-Team wasn't for real, was it?" Richie asked as soon as Murdock had gone.

MacLeod nodded.

"So I *could* really end up becoming a member of the A-Team?" asked Richie.

"Don't get any more crazy ideas in your head," MacLeod warned. "One's enough for today."

"Crazy? Me? He's the one who's crazy. He said he was released from an insane asylum."

"That was a V.A. hospital," MacLeod explained. "Murdock's not crazy, Richie. He just needed some time off from the fight. Everyone needs that sometimes." Duncan grew reflective as he thought about when he tried to get away from the fighting and the times he spent up at his old cabin on Native American holy ground. "Especially us."

Murdock came back from his phone call. "Gotta leave."

"You just got here," MacLeod said.

"Well, Stockwell arranged to have a plane ticket waiting for me at the airport so I can leave in an hour. He also said the clean-up squad for these guys is en route."

"I'll drive you to the airport," MacLeod offered. Murdock smiled mischievously and Duncan knew instantly he was up to something. "What haven't you told me?"

"Well, after I checked in with good old Stockwell, I contacted Face. He came up with this *great* scam. He's gonna scam me a govern-

ment fighter over the phone. So I figure, if I leave after dinner, I can make it back before the Seattle flight. It's a stopover anyway and I hate long stopovers. Besides, Face and me are splitting the return on the cost of the ticket, forty, sixty."

"Let me guess who's getting the sixty percent," MacLeod said. "Face maybe?"

Murdock nodded. "He needs it for the cost of the phone bills," Murdock explained. "So where's a good place to eat around here?"

"Well I know this great place Charlie and I used to go to all the time."

"Really? Sounds good."

Murdock slung his backpack over his

shoulder and the two headed for the door.

"Richie, keep an eye on these guys 'til the cavalry shows," MacLeod said before they left the dojo.

Once outside Murdock asked, "What kind of food does this place serve?"

Duncan smiled mischievously. "Chinese."

"Not another hangover," Murdock protested. "I'm flying tonight." He continued walking, trying to keep up the serious facade. Then Murdock and MacLeod both broke out into uncontrollable laughter.

A black and white portrait of a man with dark, wavy hair, looking slightly to the left. He is wearing a dark sweater over a light-colored collared shirt. The background is a textured, mottled grey.

ALL FOR ONE

by Irene Snyder Schwarting

There is a time and a place for resistance, Face reflected, and this was neither. Accordingly, he complied meekly as the MPs yanked his wrists together behind his back and tightly affixed the handcuffs. He remained motionless as they fastened leg irons to his ankles, and shuffled obediently into the waiting van when ordered. Only when he was chained securely to the wall of the van did Decker remove the pistol barrel that was grinding into his temple.

"That's one," the army colonel growled to his aide. "Let's get him back to the base and start rounding up the others."

Apart from never lowering the rifles aimed at their prisoner, the MPs were reasonably pleasant as the van drove through the California countryside, finally pulling into an army base well outside of LA. One unchained him and helped him out of the van, while the others backed up to a safe distance, rifles at the ready. Jeez, Face thought, *what am I gonna do, sneeze at them?* He wiggled his fingers, which were growing numb in the tight cuffs, and looked around for Decker. The colonel was nowhere in sight, though, and before he could finish perusing the area he was marched into the base.

The guards had their orders, it seemed, for he was taken directly to a cell. A set of prison gray fatigues were waiting on the cot, and guards watched with steady eyes and rifles while he changed into them. When he'd finished, the guard refastened his irons and took his clothes away, leaving him locked up but alone. Face noted with some amusement that the fatigues already had 'PECK' blazoned boldly above the pocket, and even had the appropriate insignia. *Bet Decker's had this setup ready for a long time*, Face mused idly. He suspected there were two matching cells down the hall, waiting for their occupants to be captured.

Wonder if Amy got away? He'd seen the MPs loading her into a car, and hoped she wasn't under arrest. It depended on just how good an actor she was - whether she could convince Decker that she wasn't involved with him. *Not much I can do for you from here, Amy*, he apologized mentally. *I've got my own problems.*

Finally, he decided that waiting quietly was unlikely to accomplish much. *Nothing to lose by rocking the boat a bit. . .* "Hey," he called through the narrow grill at the top of the door. "Any chance I could get something to eat?"

After a few minutes the door banged open and a giant man in a sergeant's uniform entered. He closed the door behind himself. "Well, well, well," he mused, staring down at Face with narrowed eyes. "Lieutenant Templeton Peck, as I

live and breathe. Fancy meeting you here. Remember me?"

Face stared at him blankly. "No, should I?"

A look of insane fury crossed the sergeant's face and he suddenly punched the prisoner in the stomach. Face, caught by surprise and off balance with hands and feet bound, fell backwards and cracked his head resoundingly on the concrete floor. He saw stars for a moment as old memories returned. When he finally looked up at the other man, there was an unpleasant gleam in his eyes. "Stevens. You were chief of the watch at Fort Bragg. Still a sergeant? Tsk, tsk."

Stevens kicked him viciously in the kidneys, and Face curled around himself, gagging. "You're goddamn right. You three escaped on my watch, cost me a dozen promotions in the last ten years. I've been looking forward to seeing you in a cell for a long time, Peck."

"Enjoy it while you can," Face managed to say between gritted teeth.

Stevens reached down and grabbed him by the collar. Face was not a particularly small man, but Stevens yanked him to his feet like a child. There was a raving lunacy in his expression that Face remembered from long ago. The man was a slaving sadist who barely managed to contain his violent tendencies when ranking officers were around. Face wasn't surprised Stevens had never made it past sergeant; in fact, he was rather surprised he hadn't ended up in the stockade already. Face wondered just how far he could be pushed.

Stevens swung at him with the butt of his weapon. Face ducked but not far enough, and the pistol connected above his left eye. He felt blood begin to trickle down his face.

"Typical, Stevens," he taunted. "Pistol-whip a man who's tied up?" Face rattled the short chain connecting his ankles to make his point. "You always were a bully. Don't blame us that you stayed a sergeant."

Stevens' anger made him almost speechless. With an inarticulate growl, he punched Face in the stomach again.

Face doubled over, but managed to keep his balance. "One more time," he hissed, "and I'll show you how to hit like a man. Take these cuffs off." Once more, he figured, and Stevens would get careless. Face intended to take his weapon away from him before somebody got hurt.

Stevens laughed coldly. "You're not getting out of this one that easy Peck. You're gonna tell me where to find Smith and Baracus, and I'm gonna bring them in. I'm gonna get what I deserve."

Face observed him out of cool blue eyes. "I

don't doubt that," he said calmly. "In fact, I'll guarantee it."

"Tell me where to find Smith!" Stevens shouted.

Didn't need to push him far, Face decided. Stevens was just about around the bend already. How well was this cell soundproofed? If nobody responded to the shouting, life was going to get very interesting very soon. "Why should I do that?" he sneered.

"Talk, you son of a bitch," Stevens snarled. He swung the pistol again, and connected with the prisoner's jaw.

Face stumbled backwards and hit the floor again. He stayed down longer this time, then slowly levered himself to a sitting position, never taking his eyes off the other man. His lip was split and bleeding profusely, but he couldn't feel any loose teeth. A cold anger began to burn inside him, and Stevens was taken momentarily aback at the venomous glow in his eyes. Face spat a mouthful of blood onto the floor. "You son of a bitch, *sir*," he said softly.

He'd pressed the right buttons. The reminder of their difference in rank sent Stevens into a blind rage. "I'll 'sir' you, asshole," Stevens snarled and moved towards him, gun raised high.

"What the hell is going on here?" demanded a familiar voice. The door burst open and Decker stalked in, Crane and a couple of MPs hard on his heels. He surveyed the scene before him: the prisoner sprawled bleeding on the floor, Stevens standing over him with his weapon drawn and an expression of twisted fury on his features. "Sergeant, would you care to explain yourself?"

Stevens stammered. "Ah-yessir-ah, I was just, um, ah, he attacked me, sir?"

Decker looked at him steadily. "Chained hand and foot, and unarmed, Lieutenant Peck attacked you physically so that you were forced to defend yourself with your weapon?"

"Uh, I, uh-"

Decker stepped past him in cold fury, and helped Face to stand. "Sergeant, I don't believe you. In any case, *I will not stand* for the abuse of prisoners in my custody. You have overstepped your authority." He turned to the MPs. "Arrest Sergeant Stevens."

"On what charge, sir?" the MP asked formally.

"Assaulting an officer?" volunteered Face, bitterly. *Two more minutes*, he thought. If Decker had only waited two more minutes, he would have gotten hold of Stevens' gun. And put the bastard in the hospital. He really didn't care for being hit. He spat more blood onto the floor, smiling thinly as it spattered Stevens' boots.

"That'll do, for a start," Decker acknowledged dryly. He spoke to Crane. "Escort Lieutenant Peck to the infirmary. See that he is treated with respect -" he looked at Face narrowly, "- and kept under constant surveillance."

Face did not respond as, followed by Crane, he shuffled away. Decker surveyed the bloodstains on the floor a moment longer, then stalked down the hall as the MPs relieved Stevens of his weapon and hauled him away.

"I can understand Stevens' attitude," Crane remarked later as he returned to Decker's office with a bundle of documents for the colonel to sign. At Decker's raised eyebrow, he hastened to clarify. "There's no justification for that kind of an assault, of course, but Peck really can be an arrogant bastard. We came in there, kept Stevens from beating the hell out of him, and I swear he seemed disappointed. Kept needling me until I was tempted to take a swing at him myself."

"He wants you to, Captain," Decker snarled. "I have no doubt that he deliberately provoked Stevens, hoping to gain an opportunity during the fight to escape."

"You believe Stevens?"

Decker snorted. "I've reviewed the video from the camera in the cell. Peck never made a move towards Stevens. He baited him verbally, daring him to remove the cuffs. It might have worked if we'd been a bit slower. Peck was taking a chance that no one was around."

"Really? That was a helluva risk," Crane remarked. "I watched while the docs were patching him up. Stevens worked him over pretty good."

"He's a risk taker," Decker replied. "He was gambling on getting a chance to overpower Stevens and obtain his weapon before we had him fully secured. You should read his file, Crane. Like Smith, he seems to work best when the odds are against him. Peck is a very smart and a very dangerous man. Never relax your guard when the A-Team is involved." He indicated the monitor on his desk. It was tied into the hidden camera in Peck's cell, and showed the prisoner sitting shirtless on his bunk, holding an icepack against his bruised kidney. The cut on his forehead was bandaged, but he was rapidly developing a glorious black eye and his lip was beginning to swell. As if he felt the officers watching on the monitor, he looked directly at the camera and grinned. Decker scowled. Peck's slick, con-artist veneer was back in place, the patina of a playboy restored over the combat-hardened soldier they'd seen when they burst in on his fight with Stevens. Decker preferred him the other way. It was so easy to underestimate Peck!

"Have you interrogated him yet?" Crane asked idly, watching the monitor. "I'm sure he knows where the others are."

"I was interviewing Stevens," the colonel replied. "Peck may decide to press charges against him." He snorted. "Irony, isn't it? We finally have one member of the A-Team in custody, and legally he has every right to charge a soldier with assault. What is our country coming to?"

Crane tsked absently as he leaned forward to squint at the image. "What're those marks on his shoulder?"

"That's why I haven't interrogated Peck. No point."

"Sir?"

"Those are scars," Decker explained. "The A-Team spent six months in a death camp in Viet Nam." He did not have to continue. Crane hadn't ever served overseas himself, but he knew as well as anyone the kind of atrocities inflicted upon American prisoners in the NVA camps. Seeing the pattern of fine scars across Peck's chest and shoulders that remained after more than ten years, he shuddered to imagine the injuries that had caused them. In spite of himself, his estimation of the man in the cell went up a notch.

"There's nothing we could possibly do to them that would be worse than what they've already been through," Decker muttered, almost to himself.

"Excuse me, sir? I didn't catch that."

Decker shook his head, thoughtfully. "Just thinking aloud. They were fine soldiers, Crane. Some of the best."

Crane nodded sympathetically. "It's really too bad they're on the wrong side, isn't it, sir?"

"Fortunes of war, Captain." Decker frowned at the monitor, where Peck was putting his shirt on, and shook his head again. "And we have a job to do - catching the rest of the A-Team. Peck may not be willing to tell us where the others are, but I suspect his lady-friend will be more tractable. Bring her in."

☆☆☆☆☆

Amy paced from one side of the tiny room to the other. The captain who had locked her in here had said he'd be right back, but by her watch she'd been cooped up in here for almost an hour without seeing anyone at all. Captain Crane had been terribly polite although firm in his insistence that she remain in this room. She hadn't been surprised to discover that he'd locked the door behind him when he left.

She wondered what was going on. Was she under arrest? It was entirely possible. Consorting

with known criminals was a crime, she was sure. Did picking up the dinner tab come under the heading of "giving aid and succor"? Probably. But if they knew about her affiliation with the Team, why hadn't she been charged with anything?

Maybe they hadn't really connected her with the Team, but just took her because she'd been with Face when the MPs surrounded him. She considered what he'd hissed under his breath when Decker materialized beside him: "Play dumb." If they thought she was just one of his bimbos, she might get away. With this thought in mind, she unfastened the top button of her blouse and pulled a stick of gum out of her purse. "Nobody takes somebody who chews gum seriously," Face had told her in one of his rare discourses on the art of deception. "And it's often important to appear unimportant." She'd seen many times how he and Hannibal used simple props to change their entire image for a con. She hoped it would work for her. Mentally reviewing her high school acting classes, she ran a hand through her long hair to tousle it and cracked her gum noisily as Decker and Crane entered.

"About time," she demanded of them. "Will you please tell me what the hell is going on here? One minute I'm having a quiet drink and then a bunch of army goons are stuffing me into a van!"

Crane and Decker looked at each other. This wasn't what they'd been expecting, Amy could tell. "Miss Allen," Crane began awkwardly, but she cut him off. One of Hannibal's epigrams came back to her: "The best defense is a good offense."

"- And then you drag me out here into the middle of nowhere and lock me up! Who do you think you are, Mister?"

"Miss Allen, calm down," said Decker in a tone that brooked no nonsense, and Amy subsided. "Miss Allen, you are in a great deal of trouble."

"Why? What'd I do? I don't know anything about the Army!" She cracked her gum defiantly.

"How well do you know Lieutenant Peck?" Crane asked, trying to regain control of the interview.

"Who?" Amy gave him her best blank look.

"The man you were with in Burt's Lounge has been a fugitive from military justice for more than ten years," Decker snapped.

Time for the dumb-blond routine, Amy decided. She widened her eyes in innocent horror. "Steven? He's what?"

"His name is Lieutenant Templeton Peck," Crane repeated, "and he's a wanted criminal."

"Don't be silly," Amy said scornfully. "His name is Steven Parker. He's an orthodontist."

Isn't he? That's what he told me . . ." Crane nodded significantly to Decker, and Amy was glad Face had mentioned his current scam.

"What were you doing with the lieutenant?" Decker asked cuttingly.

"Nothing. Well, nothing illegal. It's just a bar - I went in there to get a drink, and, well, he just started talking to me, and . . ." She put on her flustered expression, then raised her chin defiantly. "Okay, I was trying to pick him up. There's nothing wrong with that, is there? I'm single, he's good-looking . . . lots of people go there to, um, meet people . . ." She trailed off and snapped her gum in embarrassment.

"Miss Allen, what do you do for a living?"

"I work for the Courier." There was no point to dodging that one; if they knew her name, they already knew that. Another one of Face's rules came back to her: "Never lie about anything they can verify." She decided to get back on the offensive. "No, wait a minute," she frowned at the officers. "Templeton Peck? You mean he's part of the A-Team?"

Decker nodded grimly. They had her now. "Miss Allen, we know that you spent considerable time and effort last year researching and trying to contact the A-Team. I find it hard to believe that you didn't recognize Lieutenant Peck."

"But I didn't contact them! Sure I researched them, that's what I do. I'm a reporter." She fished out her press ID card and waved it at them. "But I never found out anything. I got as far as this Mr. Lee weirdo downtown, and then the story dried up. It was like they just disappeared. I've never seen any of them except in some old pictures. How should I have recognized him?" She let her lip quiver. *If all else fails, cry.*

The trembling lip worked as well on Crane and Decker as it ever had on a series of boy-friends. The Army officers looked uncomfortably at each other, then Decker said, "Will you excuse us a moment, Miss Allen?" Amy dug through her purse for a tissue and blew her nose victoriously as the officers left.

"I'm sorry, Colonel," Crane said apologetically as they returned to Decker's office. "I don't think she knows anything about the A-Team."

"I don't think she knows anything at all," Decker replied nastily. "What a flake."

"So you buy her story?"

Decker sighed. "We know Peck is a real ladies' man. He's been spotted at that bar with at least six different women, all single, attractive, young, professionals. Miss Allen differs only in that she is not blond."

"What about that Mr. Lee she mentioned?"

"Lynch sent agents to Lee three different

times," Decker reminded his aide, "and was stonewalled every time. The A-Team is very careful. I have no doubt that they spotted her as a reporter a mile away. Honestly, I don't wonder that Peck pulled the wool over her eyes."

"So what do we do with her?"

Decker flipped on the monitor, which was now tuned to the hidden camera in the interrogation room. The woman was industriously writing in a notebook, head bowed so that the camera picked up a remarkable extent of cleavage. The men admired the view for a long moment, then Decker flipped the channel. Peck was sprawled on his cot, apparently asleep. Leaving the monitor set to that less-distracting image, Decker looked sternly at his aide. "We let her go," he announced. "We cannot afford the publicity she could stir up, and we really have no reason to keep her. So far, her story checks out."

"But you don't believe it?"

"Not entirely. We let her go, but we keep a tail on her. I want to know where she goes, what she does, and who she talks to when she leaves here. Stick to her like a flea on a dog. And Crane?"

"Yes sir?"

"Try to be discreet, but keep her quiet. If she is working with the A-Team, we don't want to alert them. And we certainly don't need this whole operation spread over the front pages of the Courier." Decker sometimes thought the free press was the bane of a well-organized government.

"How do I stop her, sir? A-Team or not, she's a reporter. If we try to shut her up, she'll cry First Amendment and blow the whole thing."

Decker sighed. Typical of Peck, he thought, to pick the least convenient of all possible women to be arrested in the company of. "Tell her that if she'll sit on this and not report that Peck's been arrested, I'll give her an exclusive when we get the whole Team in custody. If that doesn't work, take her to dinner."

"Sir!"

Decker gave his thin-lipped smile. "Just joking, Captain. That would be above and beyond the call of duty. Perhaps the young lady will be reasonable."

Amy was more than willing to be reasonable if it would get her out in one piece. She waved magnanimously, popping her gum nonstop, when Crane apologized for the inconvenience they'd caused her. With some effort, she reluctantly let him convince her not to tell anyone what had befallen her until the rest of the A-Team was in custody. Letting her reporter instincts guide her, she insisted on a guaranteed interview with both the A-Team and Colonel Decker. "As soon as you

get them into custody," she amended, but made sure that her tone held only complete confidence in the efficiency of the Army.

Seeing no way to get out of it, she graciously accepted Crane's offer of a ride home. On the way, she racked her brains for the most mindless prattle she'd ever heard Face's bimbos spew. *I've never tried so hard to be so dumb*, she thought sardonically, watching Crane out of the corner of her eye, but if she was going to help Face it was imperative that they underestimate her. She could not afford to be connected with the Team. Crane was obviously bored to tears by the time they reached her house, but it was equally obvious to Amy that he was going to stick to her like glue. Perhaps he wasn't convinced by her act, she thought, hiding her reluctance to grant his request to come inside to use the facilities.

While Crane availed himself of the bathroom, Amy hastily scanned her living room to make sure there were no signs of the Team, then headed into the kitchen. Crane was clearly under orders to keep an eye on her: she hoped that her intention to get rid of him was not equally clear.

She continued to babble inanely until Crane ran out of excuses. Then, just when she thought she'd convinced him to leave, the phone rang. Amy hesitated inside her perky facade, noting how Crane was alerted to the phone. With a sick feeling but a bright smile, she picked it up. "Hello?"

"Hi kid," Hannibal greeted her. "How's tricks?"

"Oh, hi Marcia!" Amy bubbled back. Crane was watching her closely, blatantly trying to eavesdrop. "Yeah, I just got home."

"Marcia?" Hannibal's confusion was evident in his tone. She pressed the earpiece close to her head so his voice wouldn't carry. "Amy, what's going on?"

"Oh, no, I was out running errands. It's just been a long day."

Hannibal was silent for a moment. "Amy, are you in trouble? Is Face there?"

"Yes and no. Hang on a minute." Amy smiled at Crane and covered the mouthpiece with her hand, loosely, so Hannibal could hear. "Girlfriend," she explained, then lifted the phone again. "Yeah, I'm back."

Hannibal was quick on the uptake. "You're in trouble, Face is not there, and there's somebody you can't talk in front of. Is that it?"

"Sure thing," Amy said agreeably.

"We can be there in ten minutes," Hannibal told her. "Are you going to be okay?"

Hannibal and B.A. showing up was precisely what Amy was trying to avoid. "Yeah, I'd love

to." She thought fast. "How about the Forecastle? That's a great place to meet people. Say, about nine?" Crane was moving closer, trying to overhear the voice on the other end of the line. "Okay," Amy said hastily, "I'll see you there. Right. Bye-bye."

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"What's up, Hannibal?" asked B.A. as the white haired colonel climbed back into the van.

"Not sure," Hannibal replied thoughtfully. "Something's wrong, but Amy couldn't tell me what - there was somebody there with her."

B.A. snickered. "Faceman makin' moves again?"

Hannibal shook his head. "No, she's in some kind of trouble. Face isn't there. She said to meet her at 'the Forecastle.' You ever heard of that?"

"Nope." B.A. eased the van into gear. "Is that a bar?"

"I've never heard of it." Hannibal thought for a moment. "On a ship, the captain's quarters are directly behind the forecastle. I wonder if that's what she meant?"

"Captain's quarters? You think she means Murdock?"

Hannibal nodded decisively and fished in the glove box for a cigar. "That's exactly what I think. Head for the V.A."

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"You lost her?" Decker demanded when Crane called in. "How did that happen, Captain?"

"She drives like a bat out of hell, Colonel," Crane responded, dispirited. "I couldn't keep an eye on her in traffic without letting her know she was being followed, but I know where she was going - the Forecastle. I'll head out there and pick her up again."

"The Forecastle? What's that?"

"It's a really sleazy bar downtown," the captain replied sheepishly. "I've never been there myself, but some of the men go there to, um, meet, um, ladies. Um . . . professional ladies, sir."

Decker nodded to himself. "I wonder if our Miss Allen doubles as a streetwalker," he said irritably. "Shameful, what our society is coming to. Oh well. Looks like another dead end, Captain. That's all right. I'd rather have you back here. Get some men to go down there, give them her description and we'll hang back to see if she makes contact with the A-Team."

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As soon as she was sure she'd lost her tail in the downtown streets, Amy headed out to the V.A., hoping that Hannibal had read her message right. She hurried into the hospital, glad that it was still official visiting hours. Murdock met her in the corridor and escorted her back to his room, where B.A. and Hannibal were waiting. Hannibal greeted her with an uncharacteristically serious expression. "What's going on, kid?"

Amy quickly filled the men in on the afternoon's events, including Face's suggestion and her subterfuge. "I feel so guilty," she finished. "If I wasn't there, he might have gotten away."

"Possibly," said Hannibal absently.

"Yeah," said B.A. more sympathetically, "but more likely you bein' there made him careful, stopped him from doin' some fool thing an' gettin' hisself shot. Faceman don't think too straight, sometimes, less'n he's got somebody to take care of."

"True enough," said Hannibal, who hadn't really been listening. "Amy, do you think Decker bought your story?"

"Not completely. I told Crane I was going to the Forecastle to meet my girlfriend, but he followed me anyway. I shook him downtown."

"You sure you lost him?" B.A. said doubtfully.

Amy smiled at the gruff sergeant. "Hey, B.A., I learned from a master. I've been watching you drive for the last year."

B.A. grinned. "Can't get a better teacher than that," Hannibal concurred. "Next you can get Murdock to give you flying lessons."

"Any time." Murdock looked entirely too enthused at the prospect. B.A. looked ill.

"So, we have two missions here," Hannibal continued. "One, to get Face out of the hoosegow. Two, to make sure Decker doesn't have any reason to associate you with the A-Team." He looked at the sketch Amy had drawn of the parts of the base she saw. "I don't know this base, it must be new. We need to get some plans of it, get a feel for what's where. Murdock, think you could get us some aerial shots?"

"Sure," Murdock agreed immediately. "That's public record, Colonel, they got 'em on file at the library downtown. Blueprints, aerials, the whole works. Freedom of Information Act."

"He's right," Amy said, surprised. "I didn't even think about that, but all the plans regarding federal construction projects are required to be available to the public. I guess new military bases would come under that description."

"Anybody kin get in and see the plans for army depots?" B.A. asked, incredulous.

Amy nodded. "I think so."

"What a great country we live in," Hannibal said cheerfully. "Okay, Murdock, that's your job. Get those plans. Amy, get back home, let Decker's tails pick you up again. I'll call our client and tell him there's been a temporary change of plans. We'll move on Decker tomorrow. We should be back on schedule by the end of the week."

"What's the plan, Hannibal?" B.A. wanted to know.

"Decker thinks Amy's working for us," Hannibal started.

Murdock interrupted, "Which she is."

"Yes, but we don't want him to know that. So we're gonna make him think that *we* think she's working for *him*. Feel up to doing some more acting, Allen?" Amy stared at him, confused. "You're gonna be our ticket into that base. We're gonna offer Decker you for Face."

"Why would he go for that? I'm not working for him."

Hannibal shrugged. "Yes, but he doesn't know that we know that. He can't afford to take the risk that a civilian to get hurt in his chasing us. Particularly," he tapped her attaché case, "a reporter. And particularly when he knows that it's his actions, arresting you, that makes us think you're working for him. We've cost him enough bad press as it is."

"Boy, this is complicated," complained Murdock. "It makes my head hurt."

"That's cuz you're crazy, fool," B.A. explained. "It's simple, see? We're gonna go in there with Amy hostage, an' Decker's gonna have a simple choice: let Faceman go or take the blame for an' innocent civilian gettin' hurt."

Hannibal patted Amy's arm comfortingly. "Don't worry, kid. I promise, you won't get hurt. Just look scared, and play dumb like you did for Decker this afternoon, and it'll go like clock-work."

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Decker spent the evening in his office, as he did many nights. Crane reported for duty promptly at six to find his colonel already at his desk, examining the reports from the men sent to the Forecastle night before. "Allen never showed up," he growled. "She was back home before ten o'clock, spent the night in her house, alone."

"That doesn't signify anything, Colonel," Crane objected. "She might have just changed her mind about going dancing."

"I know. Or she might have met her friend and gone somewhere else before our men got there. Or she might have gone to meet the A-Team. She was out of sight for over an hour. I wish I knew

where she went." He dropped the file in disgust and turned on the monitor. Peck was still asleep, tossing restlessly on the narrow prison cot. "I'm going to go talk to the prisoner," Decker told his aide. "I've got a feeling that Smith is up to something."

Down in the prison wing, Decker peered through the barred slit at the man in the cell. Peck was still tossing in his sleep, muttering something under his breath. Decker paused in opening the door to listen. "Khuong biet," Peck mumbled. "Khong, khong."

"What's he saying?" Decker demanded quietly of the guard.

"Dunno, sir. He's been mumbling like that for about half an hour. Sounds like Chinese to me."

Vietnamese, rather. Was Peck having a flashback to 'Nam? It wasn't at all uncommon, Decker knew. Many soldiers had nightmares about that war; Decker had had more than a few himself. He reviewed his limited knowledge of Vietnamese. "I don't know," he translated aloud. "No, nothing."

Suddenly Peck started upright, eyes wide and disoriented. "Khong, Chao! Du ma mi!" he cried. He stared wildly around, then, as his surroundings resolved into an American jail cell, he sighed and slumped back down on the pallet.

This is as good a time as any, Decker decided. It was an age-old tactic that had proven successful time and time again; a man is at his weakest, most likely to break down or confess more than he intends, when he's just awakened. And if Peck had been having some kind of nightmare, so much the better. When he entered the cell, Peck looked up wearily. "Morning, Colonel."

"Good morning, Lieutenant. Sleep well?"

Peck indicated his handcuffs irritably. "As well as I ever do in irons. Is this really necessary?"

Decker kept his distance. "Stevens claims you attacked him."

"Stevens is a lunatic," Peck said dryly. He sat up to face the older officer. "But you didn't need me to tell you that. Your security camera recorded the whole thing."

"What makes you think there's security cameras in here?" Decker hedged.

Peck yawned. "Because otherwise it would be the first prison cell since the invention of television not to have video monitoring. Oh, have it your way. You didn't come down here to chat about your security arrangements. What's on your mind, Colonel?" He rubbed his eyes sleepily, wincing as he touched the shiner that had formed around the left.

"You are, Peck," Decker said frankly. He leaned against the door and folded his arms. "I'm curious. Do you expect to break out of here?"

Peck shrugged. "Well, Colonel, nobody else has ever managed to keep us locked up. Think you're different?"

Such self-confidence was annoying in a prisoner, Decker decided. "You're alone now, Peck. The rest of the A-Team can't help you get out of this one. Or do you think Smith and Baracus will try to break you out of here?"

"They might." Peck shook his head judiciously. "Then again, Hannibal might figure I deserve to cool my heels a while for being careless." He yawned again. "Listen, Colonel, if we're going to debate this, I gotta get some coffee."

Decker looked over his shoulder and spotted the guard arriving with the prisoner's breakfast. He stepped aside from the door as the sentry entered, deposited the tray, and left, locking the cell door behind himself. Peck lifted the coffee cup gingerly in bound hands and sipped appreciatively. "Ah, that's good stuff," he commended the colonel. He set the cup down and started to eat his eggs. "Mmm-mm good. Any chance I could get some catsup with these, though?"

"Enjoy your breakfast," Decker said, disgusted, and started to leave.

"Oh, I will," Peck assured him. "I never escape on an empty stomach. It's against my principles."

"Nobody's ever broken out of my stockade," Decker informed him, turning back from the door. "Don't think you're gonna be the first."

Peck looked up at him with genuine amusement. "Care to put money on that, Colonel? Oh, never mind, your man's got my wallet. I guess we'll just have to see what happens."

"I guarantee it, Lieutenant," Decker said. He felt like he was losing control of the interview. Peck was regaining his balance entirely too fast; he was far too confident of himself for someone locked in a cell. It made Decker nervous. He changed the subject. "Who's Chao, Lieutenant?"

Peck started and spilled his coffee. "Why do you ask?"

"You were talking in your sleep. Cursing somebody named Chao, and denying something." Decker actually had a pretty good idea who Chao was, but he wanted to stir up those old memories if it kept Peck off kilter.

"Bad habit," Peck confessed. "Ever since I was a kid. Talk in my sleep, drives my girlfriends crazy." He had gone slightly pale under his playboy tan, Decker observed, and so he kept needing.

"So what were you dreaming of, Lieutenant? Old girlfriend? Jealous husband? Who is Chao?"

Peck seemed to have lost his appetite for reconstituted eggs. "He was the commander of a POW camp in 'Nam," he said softly, staring at something beyond the wall. "He was . . . very good at . . . his job." He returned his gaze to Decker, and the colonel was suddenly and irrationally glad that the man was chained hand and foot. "We escaped from that one, Colonel. Still think you're going to keep me here?" Peck's smile bared more teeth than absolutely necessary.

Decker was beginning to regret coming down here. He wasn't entirely sure why he had decided to visit Peck in the first place, come to think of it, except to finally face one of his quarry under his own terms. An idea occurred to him. "I think so," he assured the prisoner. "Miss Allen has already told us where to pick up the others. I've got a team on the way to take them into custody right now."

"Who?"

"Miss Amy Amanda Allen, your confederate. She has already confessed to her collaboration with the A-Team," Decker bluffed. "If you can confirm her information, we might be able to work out a mitigated sentence for you."

"Miss Allen doesn't know anything," Peck said scornfully. "I just picked up the wrong girl. I don't make a point of discussing my history with my dates, you know. Besides, *if* she was a confederate of mine, and *if* she had already told you where to find Hannibal and B.A., you wouldn't be here talking to me, you'd be out there picking them up." His eyes twinkled as he looked at Decker over the rim of his coffee cup. "You're a bad bluffer, Decker. Don't play poker, you'll give away your hole card every time." He drained the coffee and set the cup down.

Decker conceded the point. "I'm serious, Lieutenant. If you'll cooperate with me and bring the others in, I'll work to get you a reduced sentence."

Peck grinned insolently and drew himself to attention. "Templeton Peck, Lieutenant, U.S. Army. 522 dash 70 dash 5333C."

"What?"

"Geneva Convention, Colonel. Name, rank, and serial number. That's all I'm required to give you. In fact, if you'll review the Code of Conduct with which you should be familiar, it's all I'm allowed to give you." He grinned again.

The man was infuriating! Peck was back in control of himself, and Decker was beginning to wish he'd never come down here. At the same time, he admitted to himself, he was beginning to understand why the A-Team had led Lynch on

such a merry chase for so long. The files he'd been given when he took over this case did not do justice to the men they described. For a brief moment he wished Peck were one of his men. "The Geneva Convention refers to prisoners of war captured by foreign powers, Peck, not military criminals legitimately arrested by lawful authority."

"Semantics, Colonel." Peck's grin faded and he sat down on the cot. "The NVA in 'Nam considered themselves the legitimate authority, and American POWs were military criminals." He leveled a challenging look at Decker. "I've been interrogated by experts. You haven't got the guts to do what it would take to get me to betray my unit to you."

Decker nodded slowly. "Point well taken, Lieutenant. I'll leave you to your breakfast." He paused. "And I'll have someone bring you some catsup. May as well make yourself comfortable, since you're going to be here for a long time."

Peck nodded cheerfully, his good humor apparently restored. "I appreciate it. Have a good day, Colonel."

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"We gotta move fast," Hannibal said to Murdock as they left the V.A. "I don't like not knowing what Decker's up to."

"What's the rush?" Murdock wanted to know. "Decker's not like Chao. Face'll be okay."

"That's not what I'm worried about," Hannibal explained. "We gotta get our plan moving before Face figures we're out of the picture and makes his own move. Nothing complicates matters like two incompatible escapes."

"Good point," said Murdock thoughtfully. He climbed into the back of the waiting van as Hannibal got into the front seat. B.A. pulled out into traffic, and they were out of sight of the hospital by the time the alarms sounded. "So what's the plan?"

Hannibal had maps and charts spread across his lap. "According to Amy, Face was taken over here, that's probably where the detention cells are. She was taken to this building across the compound, so that's probably where Decker is."

Murdock peered over his shoulder. "What, there where it says 'Camp Office'?"

"That would be it. Back here is the motor pool. B.A., if you get in there, how long will it take to disable the trucks? We don't want them following us."

"Depends on how many there are, man," B.A. said. "'Bout three minutes each, if nobody bothers me."

Murdock pulled out a recent aerial shot of

the base. "Looks like there can't be more than a dozen trucks, fifteen or twenty sedans, and miscellaneous jeeps, judging from the size of the parking lot."

B.A. shook his head. "No way man. That's too many."

"Oh, looky here," Hannibal said happily, finding another picture. "They have a tank waiting for us. How does that make you feel, B.A.?"

B.A. thought for a moment, then grinned. "Feel pretty good, Hannibal. There's somethin' we can work with."

"I thought that might give you some ideas." Hannibal looked at his watch. "Let's go get Amy."

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Damn Decker anyway, Face thought. The man had a rare talent for getting under people's skin. Coming immediately after that horrible nightmare (he shuddered and closed his eyes as he saw Chao grinning at him again, and that damned cigarette getting closer!) the colonel had thrown him completely off balance. He'd given Decker more than he intended, and that was an unusual experience for a man accustomed to manipulating everyone he encountered.

Face was not generally much inclined to introspection, but he had to figure out why Decker had managed to shake him more than anyone had in years. He should be able to get through a sparring match with Decker without breaking a sweat: it wasn't like he'd never been arrested before! It must have been the nightmare. Somehow his unconscious had tied Stevens to Chao, being beaten while tied up had fired up that connection to old, painful memories, and then being confined had only aggravated them.

Certainly his situation now was nothing like the POW camp, he assured himself, gingerly touching the lump on the back of his head. Decker considered himself a civilized commander. "I will not stand for the abuse of prisoners!" he'd bellowed at Stevens. That had surprised Face, who was half expecting Decker to support any and all action against him. And volunteering to file charges on Face's behalf? Decker wasn't all bad. Not too bright, pretty wrongheaded and persistent to a fault, but you couldn't blame the man for doing what he perceived as his duty, Face supposed. Even if it was a duty that made his own life very complicated at times.

He stretched out on his bunk and watched a pair of flies mating on the ceiling. The universal characteristic of jails, he'd decided, is that

they're boring. When the guard had come to remove his almost untouched breakfast tray, he'd asked for a deck of cards, and been denied. Since then, he'd been left completely alone with his thoughts. They were not the best of company.

The guys would come for him, he was sure. As long as Amy got clear and notified Hannibal, they'd be coming. Until they did, or something else happened to change circumstances, there wasn't much for him to do. He supposed, vaguely, that it might be overly optimistic to simply assume that he was going to escape from *another* high security stockade, but so far Hannibal had a perfect track record for jailbreaks. Besides, Face had enormous faith in his own luck. For something to do until the opportunity for action presented itself, he began a listing and rank ordering of all the lockups he'd occupied. Somewhere in the teens he lost count and had to start over. The POW camp clearly held down one end of the scale, and the presidential suite at Caesar's Palace in Vegas was gonna be hard to beat. Face smiled to himself as he remembered the "guards" there: Hannah, Brenda, and Michelle.

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Decker, watching from his office on the security camera, saw that quiet smile and wondered what it signified. An unpleasant thought occurred to him, and he called Crane into his office. "What news do we have of Miss Allen?" he asked.

Crane checked his clipboard. "She left the house at eight o'clock, and has been in her office at the Courier since," he reported.

Decker scowled. "Keep close surveillance on her."

"What's up, Colonel?"

"I have a feeling Smith may be making his move soon," Decker told his aide. "I'm still not sure what Miss Allen's relationship to the A-Team is, but she's our only link to them. We have one advantage, though."

"Sir?"

"We have Peck. That means that whatever he does, Smith is going to have to come to us, and that gives us the high ground. Put the base on alert, Captain."

"Yes sir." Crane turned to go, when a young corporal hurried into the office without knocking.

"Sorry to interrupt, sirs," he said breathlessly, "but we just got a call from Lieutenant Strayer. Miss Allen has been kidnapped."

"Kidnapped?" growled Decker, leaping from behind his desk and looming over the corporal.

"Yes sir. She left the Courier building to go to lunch, and apparently was abducted in the

ladies' room of the deli. Details are unclear, but witnesses report that a white-haired man smoking a cigar grabbed her and dragged her out the window. Apparently the getaway vehicle was a black van, driven by a large black man. The entire operation was over before our men could act, sir."

"Smith and Baracus," Decker spat the names like a curse. "I knew it."

"Knew what, sir?" Crane was thoroughly confused. The corporal, suddenly ignored, crept back out of the office.

"Put yourself in Smith's shoes. One of his men is arrested in the company of a young lady, who is also taken into custody and is then, for no apparent reason, released and left to go about her business. What is he thinking?" Decker was very annoyed that he hadn't considered this possibility earlier. Peck had even given him a clue! He couldn't afford *not* to outthink Smith, not at this stage of the game.

Crane was a bit slow, but not stupid. "You think Smith thinks that she was working for us?"

"That's exactly what he's thinking," Decker confirmed. "Lynch tried it several times, using attractive young women to draw out both Smith and Peck. Particularly given the inquiries Miss Allen was making about the A-Team last year, and given the reward for capturing the A-Team, Smith will assume that she was another attempt at bait and will act accordingly. His next move is going to be to come here."

"Smith's going to try to trade us Miss Allen for Peck," Crane concluded. "Even though she was not working for us."

"He doesn't know that, and if she denies it or we do, he still won't believe it. She is an innocent civilian, Crane, and we have a responsibility to protect her."

"Are you going to agree to the trade then?" Crane couldn't believe his ears.

"Not at all." He gave Crane a thin smile. "We still hold the high ground, Captain, he still has to come here. We know where Smith and Baracus will have to be, and we'll have them surrounded. 'Step into my parlor, said the spider to the fly'."

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"Sorry to bang you up there," Hannibal apologized as Amy straightened her skirt. "You okay, Allen?"

"You scared the hell out of me!" she snapped. "Bursting out of the closet like that waving that rifle around! And then yanking me out the window like a sack of laundry! You might have warned me." She tucked her blouse into her

skirt and scowled at him.

"I meant to scare you," Hannibal said calmly, biting the end off his cigar. "It had to be realistic. All those women had to report to Decker that you were kidnapped against your will, or this plan isn't gonna work."

"Well, I'm sure they will," Amy said, a bit sullenly. It was really annoying, sometimes, how Hannibal always managed to have a reasonable explanation for what he did. "I almost had a heart attack. Why is Murdock dressed up like that? Do I want to know?"

The captain turned sideways from his driving to grin at her. Stage makeup blackened his skin, and his shaggy brown hair was drawn up in a poor imitation of B.A.'s mohawk. Dozens of heavy gold necklaces were draped around his neck, and enormous feathered earrings dripped from his ears. "Just imitatin' my hero, mama," he drawled. "I always did want to be more like B.A."

"You look ridiculous," she told him icily.

"That's okay," Hannibal said. "It only had to work for a few seconds. Decker knows that B.A. usually drives the van, so when his men report that I kidnapped you and a black man wearing gold jewelry was driving, he'll assume it was B.A."

"Where is B.A.?"

"Elsewhere," Hannibal said flatly. "Don't take it personally, Amy. At this point, the less you know, the better. The army's gonna give you a pretty hard time, even if everything goes according to plan. And we've gotta be history for a while, once we get Face. You're gonna be running this scam on your own. You sure you're up for it?"

"What if I'm not?"

Hannibal pursed his lips thoughtfully. "Then we'll have to come up with something else. We can probably get Face out, somehow, but that'll still leave Decker hot on your trail. We'll have to disappear."

It was clear to Amy that he meant they would disappear from her life as well. The A-Team's fugitive existence depended on their not being traceable. She could not endanger them, and if this was the only way to throw Decker off her scent . . . she swallowed and nodded firmly. "Part and parcel of being part of the A-Team," she agreed. "I knew what I was getting in for when I first contacted you."

"I doubt that, but thanks," Hannibal said dryly. He produced a short length of twine and a cotton handkerchief. "You're gonna be my prisoner, and we're gonna demand that Decker let Face go or else I'm going to blow your head off in front of him. You'll have to act like you believe it."

Amy nervously eyed the rifle Hannibal wore slung across his lap. "I think I can do that." She wished her voice wasn't trembling quite so much.

Hannibal gave her a comforting grin. "Don't worry, Allen. This is gonna work, and we'll all owe you a big one."

☆☆☆☆☆

B.A. ducked through the barbed wire fence. Moving with a quickness improbable in a man his size, he slipped in among the vehicles, his toolbelt banging against his hip. Here, he was at home. He'd grown up working in garages, before joining the Army and being assigned to working in the motor pool. He knew these trucks inside and out, all of their quirks and foibles, what they could and could not do. Like an expert horseman, he could size up a vehicle at a glance and know its capabilities, know what it would do for him, and he knew how to talk it into feats it didn't believe itself capable of. He actually liked machines better than most people - they weren't treacherous or unpredictable, and sometimes he thought they had more personality. It made him almost sad to have to destroy good machinery. It wasn't the trucks' fault that the Army was going to use them for the wrong purposes. It seemed unfair that the equipment was going to have to suffer for Decker's perseverance. Apologizing silently to the first truck, he promised to do as little damage as possible, and to make sure it was temporary.

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Corporal Johnston rapped sharply on the cell door to rouse the prisoner. Peck lay motionless on his cot, as he had all morning. *Lazy bastard*, Johnston thought to himself. It seemed unfair that prisoners should have nothing to do but sleep and eat all day, while good soldiers had to stand alert and guard them. "Wake up, Lieutenant," he snapped through the barred grill. "Lunchtime."

Peck didn't move. Irritated, Johnston balanced the lunch tray on one arm as he pulled out his keys and unlocked the door. "Lieutenant, wake up!" Peck had his arms up, obscuring his face, but as he drew near Johnston suddenly realized that there was blood seeping slowly from beneath the bandage on his forehead, trickling down his face and staining the blankets below.

"Lieutenant, are you all right?" He pulled out his radio. "This is Corporal Johnston," he reported. "I think Lieutenant Peck is ill."

The radio crackled. "What's the problem,

Johnston?"

Johnston approached the cot, and leaned over Peck to examine the wound. "He's not moving, and his head injury is bleeding," he reported. "I can't tell if it's been reopened or -"

Peck moved faster than Johnston could believe. In a single, fluid gesture he went from prone on his back to sitting upright, kicked Johnston's feet out from under him so that he fell awkwardly to his knees, and had the corporal's pistol out of its holster.

"- Or if its catsup," he completed Johnston's sentence, gripping the pistol in both hands and leveling it at him. "Shame, shame, Corporal. Don't they teach you anything these days about the art of playing possum? Be a good soldier, and you won't get hurt. Set the tray down, and give me your keys." Johnston hesitated, and Peck thumbed the hammer back. "Don't be a hero, kid," he said gently. "You know I've got nothing to lose by blowing your head off at this point." Johnston pulled the keys out of his pocket and slowly set them on the cot beside Peck. "Good man," Peck said approvingly. "Now lay down on the floor and don't move."

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Decker stood in the guard tower and watched with binoculars as the black van drew near the base. The gate guards, obeying orders, waved the van through into the center of the compound. His fears were confirmed when the van's door slid open and Smith and the girl appeared. Her eyes looked terrified above the gag as she stumbled out, hands tied behind her back. Smith had a rifle ground into her back and a cigar clenched in his teeth. "Hey, Decker!" he shouted, looking around the compound.

"What do you want, Smith?" Decker grated.

Smith looked up and spotted him. "Oh, there you are, Decker," he said cheerfully. "Don't ask stupid questions. I want Face, and in exchange I'll return your property." He shook the girl to make his point. She whimpered.

"Let Miss Allen go," Decker told him. "She is an innocent civilian." He didn't really expect to be believed, and he was right.

Smith snorted. "Come on, Decker, that's lame even for you. She set Face up for the reward, and in my books that makes her even more scum than you are."

Decker spread his hands. "I know it's hard to believe, Smith, but she really is innocent. My men picked her up because we thought she was working for you."

Smith laughed nastily. "Tell me another one."

"Can you get him?" Decker whispered quietly to the sharpshooter crouched beside him in the tower.

"No sir," he replied, squinting through the sights. "He's too close to the van. I can't be sure of taking him down without getting the girl. If you can get him to move away from the van a few steps, or get the girl away from him, I can take him in a second."

"How about Baracus?" Decker asked, looking at the dark shape behind the steering wheel of the van.

"That's bulletproof glass, sir. Look at the way the light reflects off it."

"Hurry up, Decker," Smith shouted. "Army bases give me hives, and when my trigger finger gets itchy people get hurt. I would rather not have to shoot this lovely young lady just on principle. Get Face out here." The girl mumbled something around the gag in her mouth. She looked like she was about to faint. Smith held her unsympathetically upright.

"I'm going to draw him away from the van," Decker told the sharpshooters. "As soon as you have a clear shot, shoot to kill." He raised his voice. "I don't believe you'll shoot her, Smith. We're both soldiers, and we don't involve civilians in military operations." Across the compound, he could see the tank moving into position.

Smith grinned. "That's rich, Decker . . . I fought in Viet Nam. In any case, she's no civilian. You involved her by sending her after Face, and that makes her an operative and combatant. I'm running out of patience." He shook the girl again.

"Hold on just a minute, Smith," Decker shouted. "I'm coming down there. Don't do anything foolish." The tank was nearly into position to cover the van, and behind the buildings he saw three squadrons of men getting ready for the ground assault. Another thirty seconds, he decided, and everything would be set. He climbed down the ladder and walked slowly towards where Smith waited with the girl.

"That's far enough, Decker," Smith warned him. Decker stopped, hands raised.

"Let Miss Allen go, Smith. This is between you and me." The girl nodded frantically. "Let her go, and I will take her position, and we will negotiate from there about Lieutenant Peck."

Hannibal was surprised. That was not an option he had expected Decker to take. He opened his mouth to reject the offer when a sudden movement across the compound caught his eye. "Okay," he decided abruptly. He pulled the rifle off of Amy and aimed it at Decker. "Get out of here, bitch." He shoved her, hard, and she

stumbled clear as he ducked back into the van. "Come here, Colonel," he invited Decker.

"What? I can't hear you," Decker stalled. All around the compound, soldiers waited, weapons ready but motionless, waiting for their C.O.'s signal.

"Oh, yes you can," Hannibal snarled. "You think I'm going to get out and make a pretty little target for your marksmen in the tower to shoot at? I'm not that dumb. I think I like to have you standing in between me and them." He saw that Amy had made her way clear, and was sobbing pitifully as a soldier unbound her hands and removed the gag.

"Then it seems we have a standoff," Decker said, smiling grimly. "My men won't shoot you while you have a gun on me, but you can't shoot me or they'll blow you away. But I can wait longer than you can, Smith, and I've got Peck. Give yourselves up. Prison beats a coffin."

"But a full house beats two pair," said another voice. Something cold and hard ground into Decker's ear. "Hi, Hannibal, nice of you to drop by."

Hannibal grinned and lowered the rifle that had been trained on Decker. "Hey, Face, how's it going?"

Face shrugged. "So-so. I was wondering if you guys were ever going to show." He pushed Decker, who, resigned, began walking towards the van. The gun at his head never moved. The other soldiers around were a still life. Amy had wilted into the arms of the surprised private. Hannibal smiled to himself. Allen was gonna be just fine. She'd probably get a helluva story out of this one.

"Well, we got tired of waiting," Hannibal replied. "I told you, next time you're late we're leaving without you."

"Sorry, I was unavoidably detained." He reached the van with his prisoner, and turned Decker around to face him.

"How did you do it?" Decker snapped. He noticed that Peck had swapped his gray fatigues for standard olive drab with the name "Johnston" above the pocket, and had his own clothes in a bundle under his arm. "Did you kill Corporal Johnston for his uniform?"

"Don't be ridiculous," Face told him. "He'll be a bit red in the face when he gets let out of the cell, but nobody ever died of embarrassment." He turned his attention to Hannibal. "Now what, Hannibal?"

"Now we leave," Hannibal said as if it were the most obvious thing in the world.

"It's not that easy, Smith," said Decker. On cue, the tank rumbled into view between the barracks. The massive gun was trained on the

van. "This vehicle may have bulletproof windows, but not that bulletproof, and the gunner has orders to shoot if you make any attempt to move this van. Stalemate. Give yourselves up."

"It'll take you out, too," said Face, a trifle incredulous.

"That's a risk I'm prepared to take. A soldier has to be prepared to lose his life in the performance of his duty." Decker turned his attention to the lieutenant. "And you know I'm not bluffing this time."

"I believe that," said Hannibal thoughtfully. "But still, what's life without a little risk? Get in, Face. You too, Decker." He slid across the back seat while Face shrugged and pushed the Army colonel in. "Let's get out of here," he suggested to the driver.

Decker suddenly realized that the man driving the van was far too thin to be Baracus; was, in fact, a white man in disguise. "Where's Baracus?" he demanded, trying to identify the man through the heavy makeup, but a second later his question was answered. The tank's gun swung around and fired, blowing away two legs of the watchtower. Screaming sharpshooters leapt clear as the tower toppled slowly to the ground. The tank then rumbled to life, pursuing the van.

"It's kind of like Gin," Hannibal explained cheerfully, "except that we took your ace-in-the-hole and made it into ours."

"More like Go Fish," the driver suggested. He waved farewell to the soldiers who were finally beginning to move as he wheeled the van around and headed for the gate.

"I imagine the base is sealed up tight, except for this entrance, right, Decker?" Hannibal asked, but got no response. "That's what I thought. Good." He addressed the driver. "Once you get out of the base, pull over."

"You got it."

Decker flinched as a few bullets whined above the roar of the van's engine and spiderwebs appeared in the windshield, but the A-Team seemed unconcerned. Tires squealed as the van peeled out past the guardhouse, swinging around the corner on two wheels and then coming to a sudden stop. Hannibal kept his rifle buried in Decker's side while Face slid the door open and peered behind them. As he watched, the tank rumbled to a stop in the middle of the gate, filling it from wall to wall. Nothing happened for a long moment, then the top hatch popped open and B.A. appeared. The sergeant scrambled out of the tank, grinning broadly, ran for the open van door and jumped in. Face slid the door shut and the van peeled out again.

"Welcome back, Faceman," said B.A. affectionately as he scrambled past into the front

passenger seat.

"It's good to be here," Face said cheerfully. "Beautiful parking job, B.A. But how long is it going to take them to get that tank moving and come after us again?"

B.A. held up a massive fistful of wires. "Long as it takes 'em to build an new ignition system," he responded happily. "Nobody's gonna be startin' that baby for a long time."

"It won't work, Smith," Decker growled. "My men will be after you in squad cars and trucks within seconds."

"I doubt that," Hannibal said. "See, we knew we couldn't disable every vehicle in camp, so B.A. took out a strategic few trucks that would be the first ones out the gate. They'll get about thirty yards and die, completely in the way. I expect the motorpool looks like a shopping mall parking lot the day after Thanksgiving right about now." For the first time, he noticed the bandage on Face's forehead and the swollen blue bruise around his eye. "What happened to you, Lieutenant?" The gaze he turned on Decker was less friendly than before.

"Ran into an old acquaintance - Stevens, from Fort Bragg." Recognition bloomed immediately in Hannibal's eyes, and Face hastened to continue. "I owe Colonel Decker here for that one. He pulled Stevens off, just in time. Threw him in irons and volunteered to press charges for me." He tipped an imaginary hat to Decker. "I do appreciate that, Colonel, but I'm afraid I won't be around to testify."

"There'll be another time, Peck," said Decker.

"Don't hold your breath," said Hannibal unsympathetically. "But in appreciation, Colonel, we won't drop you in the desert."

"What do you intend to do with me?"

"Once we know we've lost pursuit, we'll drop you off somewhere near a phone," said Hannibal casually. "Maybe you can get Miss Allen to pick you up."

"She wasn't working for me, you know," Decker said wearily.

Hannibal shrugged. "I don't really care whether she was or not," he lied. "She's your problem now. We'll have nothing more to do with her." He looked at his teammates and grinned. "I love it -"

Face and Murdock chorused, "- When a plan comes together!"

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True to their word, the A-Team dropped Decker outside a gas station in Hollywood. "Au revoir, Colonel," said Face. He looked suddenly pensive.

"Under other circumstances, I could say I was looking forward to meeting you again."

"I could say I was looking forward to meeting you under other circumstances," Decker admitted. "But I have a duty to perform."

Face sighed. "I know. Ah, well, c'est la vie." He flipped a salute towards Decker, then slid the van door shut. Decker watched thoughtfully as the A-Team's van disappeared into the distance.



From the diary Of H.M. Murdock

I'm gonna have to have a talk with the Colonel. Imagine, me! Having to be a college student. Geez! Why can't Faceman do it? He's more experienced with these things anyways. And Billy won't even come to class with me, so I'm lonely. I wish the big guy was here. Then I'd have some fun! I can just imagine that angry mudsucker in my communications class . . . Well, so far, no sign of my quarry. Can't believe Crazy Tommy T is loose again and working through a university! I wonder if Faceyguys has scammed my tuition yet? BA's working in the physical plant. Face is laying fairly low, except for his scams, 'cause Crazy Tommy T has a bone to pick with him. A broken bone. And Hannibal's up and got himself hired as an acting teacher. Wish I had a class with him. Easy A! Then again, maybe not. I hear he's giving the students a hard time, showing them how to emote from inside a rubber suit. Well, gotta go. Time for my Television Performing class. Imagine, me, on TV! And that's the state of the war tonite, Sept. 17, 1996 (aren't we getting too old for this?)

PS- Ran into this Miami cop, also after Crazy Tommy - name of "Sonny Crockett". What a name, "Sonny"!

-HM



THE A-TEAM EPISODE GUIDE FROM HEIL

Compiled by Frank Cortez, Rhonda Eudaly, Liz Meinert, N. N. Pellegrini, Irene Schwarting

SEASON ONE

MEXICAN SLEIGHRIDE - Face's latest scheme for a horror theme-park "just across the border" goes awry when a few recently released convicts, with a score to settle with the Team, take over the controls on opening day.

CHILDREN OF JAMES BROWN - The Godfather of Soul hires the Team to rescue his kids from a dangerous cult. Special guest stars James Brown and the New Kids on the Block.

PROS AND CONS - A small-time, fan-run Star Trek convention committee hires the Team to expose Creation Convention and their shady business practices. Special guest stars DeForest Kelly and Nichelle Nichols as themselves. ("Dammit Hannibal, I'm not a doctor, I just play one on TV! And stop calling me 'Bones!'")

A SMALL AND DEADLY PAR - More than balls are flying when a local golf course hires the Team to protect their property from developers.

BAD DAY AT ROLLING ROCK - The Team is hired by the famous brewery to help get their cases of brewski to market, despite desperate attempts of beer-drinkers everywhere to intervene. Special guest stars George Wendt and John Ratzenberger.

THE RABBIT THAT ATE LAS VEGAS - Something's funny on the set of Hannibal's latest monster movie. Script from original story by Michael Crichton. Special guest star Playboy Bunny Tiffany Johnson.

HOLIDAY IN THE HILLS - Christmas plans are reluctantly put on hold when the Team is hired by an unusual Beverly Hills family claiming to be millionaires cheated out of their fortune. Can the Team save Jethro and Ellie Mae from a "serious whoopin'?" Special guest star Buddy Epton as "Jed."

THE OUT-OF-TOWNERS - The Team decides they've had enough and decide to move to the East Coast for a while, agreeing to drive the entire way for the sake of B.A. (Part 1 of 3).

WEST COAST TURNAROUND - Two weeks of New England accents and 200 parking tickets later, the Team decides they've had enough of the East Coast and head back "home" to the Los Angeles underground, only to realize that not only are the MPs waiting for them, but they also lost Murdock somewhere around the Grand Canyon (Part 2 of 3).

ONE MORE TIME - In the final part of this trilogy, the Team reaches the Grand Canyon and try to find Murdock, only to discover him missing for his part in leading "The Great Burro Rebellion," which they must resolve before they can finally go home (Part 3 of 3).

TILL DEATH DO US PART - The Team rescues Face from a shotgun wedding, against their sense of poetic justice.

THE BEAST FROM THE BELLY OF THE BOEING - The Team is hired by an airline to get rid of a monster living in the plane that scares customers by climbing out on the wing during flights. Guest starring William Shatner as the frightened customer.

A NICE PLACE TO VISIT - Hannibal meets his match? This time, it's the Team's turn to break *into* the

V.A. with Murdock, in order to investigate an odd series of disappearances. Guest starring Anthony Hopkins as Dr. Hannibal Lechter. ("Don't worry, Colonel - I'll show you the ropes! Just act like me . . ." "Yeah, like a crazy foo'!")

SEASON TWO

DIAMONDS N DUST - The Team rallies to Amy's defense when her new fiancé runs afoul of cattle rustlers in Arizona. Guest starring Clint Eastwood as himself.

RECIPE FOR HARD BREAD - The Team is called in to investigate the kidnapping of the Pillsbury Doughboy. The ransom, the top secret Pop'N'Fresh Cinnamon Roll recipe. Guest Starring: The Pillsbury Doughboy (as himself).

THE ONLY CHURCH IN TOWN - The South Philly Mafia decides to take on a new business - the Catholic church - and run all the competition out of town. Hannibal and the gang open up their own church as part of their plan to foil the mob. Script from original story by Mario Puzo.

BAD TIME ON THE BORDER - The Team gets a bad batch of burritos from Taco Bell and has to deal with the MPs and food poisoning.

WHEN YOU COMIN' BACK RANGE RIDER? - The Team is hired to find the missing Maytag Repairman, who was last seen at the sight of a freak conventional oven accident. Guest Starring: Gordon Jump (Maytag Repairman)

THE TAXICAB WARS - After driving through a strange atmospheric disturbance, the Team finds themselves in the 21st century, where killer automobiles are all the rage. Guest Starring Mel Gibson.

LABOR PAINS - The Team finds themselves in over their heads when they rescue a pregnant woman just in time for her to give birth. (Face- "You want me to do *what?*!")

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE - After a plane crash, the Team finds themselves stranded in the middle of the ocean on a life raft and are forced to listen to Murdock sing endless refrains of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat". (part 1 of 2)

THERE'S ALWAYS A CATCH - Still stranded in the ocean, the Team attempt to supplement their rations by fishing, only to accidentally catch a great white shark. Guest starring Roy Scheider as the helpful fisherman. (part 2 of 2).

STEELE - Crack private investigators Laura Holt and Remington Steele are baffled by their latest case - not even their best maneuvers can crack these hard nuts! But when they call in an old favor and bring in the A-Team, it's a whole new ball game. Guest starring Pierce Brosnan and Stephanie Zimbalist.

THE WHITE BALLET - A Russian dance troupe wants the Team to help them defect. Guest starring Mikhael Barishnikov.

THE MALTESE SCOW - A scow captain from Malta hires the Team to find a home for his unwanted barge full of garbage.

IN PLANE SIGHT - A band of rogue contractors are out to destroy a tranquil neighborhood by shaving angles into all the doors and windows, keeping everything skewed and hanging at angles. The Team's job - to even up the odds.

THE BATTLE OF BELLE AIR(HEADS) - Amy and Tawnia duke it out over which one of them is going to get to stay as the Team's female sidekick. The guys decide the only fair way to settle the dispute is a nude mudwrestling match.

SAY IT WITH BOUQUETS - Timing couldn't be better - Hannibal inherits the deed to a flower shop

shortly after parting ways with an old flame and decides to play Cupid, just in time for Valentine's day.

PURE-DEE POISON - Rocker Dee Snyder hires the Team to help him prove that the LA-based glam-metal band Poison stole his act.

IT'S A DESSERT OUT THERE - Small-time confectioners are being run out of business by a major pastry maker who doesn't tolerate competition. When they hire the Team, though, more than cream pies will fly!

SHOPPING SPREE - Tawnia's Christmas shopping for the Team gets her into trouble when the Army wants to know why she's buying AK-47s with laser scopes.

HARDER THAN IT LOOKS - That's what the guys say of BA's head, when they have difficulties knocking him out for a necessary plane trip. Will the Team *ever* make it in time for the mission? Guest starring Leslie Nielson as "The Pilot."

DEADLY MANEUVERS - Hannibal decides the Team is getting out of shape and puts them through the Obstacle Course from Hell.

SEMI-FRIENDLY PERSUASION - The Team is hired to rescue a trucking firm from being taken over by mobsters.

CURTAIN CALL - The Team is hired to help a struggling theater that the major theater companies are trying to put out of business. Unfortunately, on their way there, they run into a horrendous rainstorm and end up running over hundreds of frogs. Stopping at a local service station to repair BA's van, Murdock meets his long lost twin brother . . .

SEASON THREE

BULLETS AND BIKINIS - Face sets out to finally film his beach-movie script.

THE BEND IN THE RIVER - That's where the Team dumps Tawnia after they all get completely fed up with her incessant whining.

FIRE! - Beavis and Butthead try to hire the A-Team because, like, they kick ass.

TIMBRE - Murdock sneaks out of the V.A. and attempts to impersonate a world famous opera tenor; *amazingly*, not only does he succeed, but he also forces the Team to ask themselves: Just *what* constitutes art? Guest star Luciano Pavarotti.

DOUBLE HEAT -A pair of beautiful twins have decided they want the Faceman to give them children, and they don't care that he's not interested in fatherhood!

TROUBLE ON WHEELS - That's what the Team is calling BA's van after it keeps breaking down. Finally deciding to sell it, they have to run for it after Decker traces the ad they'd placed in "News on Wheels".

THE ISLAND - All the Team members each get a chance to live out their greatest fantasies. Guest starring Ricardo Montalban and Herve' Villechaize.

HOE-DOWN! -The team is hired by some country farmers to help put on the biggest party ever seen in that little town.

SHERIFFS OF RIVERTOWN - Starbuck finds himself in trouble after winning the post of Sheriff in a card game . . . oh, wait, sorry, wrong Dirk Benedict.

FOR WHOM THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S TOLL - Based on another one of Hemingway's 'lost' A-Team stories, the Team is hired to fight as mercenaries and then blow up a crucial bridge to help in a small country's civil war.

HOT STYLES -The Team find themselves posing as hairdressers to help a beauty salon that the mob is after.

BREAKOUT! -Murdock wins big in a video game competition, but the MPs are close on the lookout for any signs of the rest of the Team.

CUP A'JOE - Juan Valdez hires the Team to help him get the crop of Columbian Coffee Beans in on time.

THE BIG SQUEEZE - Faceman's latest flame is an exotic dancer, and the Team is in for a mess of trouble when she asks him to watch her prize boa constrictor for the weekend.

CHIMP! - A missing orangutan, a bar fight, and Clint Eastwood in a special repeat guest performance spells big trouble for B.A. and the rest of the gang.

SHIRTS AND SKINS - Beach volleyball becomes deadly serious when a group of high school students hires the Team to coach them. When they learn that the opponents are professional body builders, it's time for a real workout! Guest starring David Hasslehoff and Pamela Anderson.

ROAD GAMES - B.A. threatens Murdock's life as on the way to a job, Murdock refuses to stop playing the Alphabet Game or singing "99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall" in its entirety.

MOVING TARGETS - The Team is hired to break up a roving band of mercenary movers who hijack people's possessions as they relocate from one state to another.

KNIGHT OF THE ROAD - The long-awaited crossover episode with [Knight Rider](#), guest starring David Hasselhoff.

WASTE 'EM -The Team find themselves trapped in a huge trash compactor, only to find out that it's also inhabited by a slimy monster. Guest Starring Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher, Mark Hamill, and Peter Mayhew as Chewbacca.

BOUNTY -Whoever thought that paper towels were worth killing for? When the Team comes in to clean up this town, they stay to mop up the bad guys.

BEVERLY HILLS ASSAULT - Once again the Team is hired by Jethro and Ellie Mae; this time Jed's been kidnapped by ninja terrorists, the young 'uns are restless, and Ma's fit to fill someone's hide fulla rock salt.

TROUBLE BREWING - Face's latest scam involves starting a microbrewery, but when the ATF gets involved, chaos reigns. Guest starring Janet Reno as herself.

INCIDENT AT CRYSTAL LAKE - While on vacation, the A-Team investigates the bizarre disappearances of several tourists, possibly to a prehistoric water creature at the mysterious 'Camp Crystal Lake.' Along the way they cross paths with two FBI agents. Guest starring David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson. Special cameo appearance by John "Jason" Priestley.

SEASON FOUR

JUDGMENT DAY - The Team is hired by Maria Shriver to rescue her husband "Arnold", who after a bump to the head thinks he's a Series XXX Terminator and is trying to amass parts for a time machine to return "back to the future." Cameo appearances by Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd.

WHERE IS THE MONSTER WHEN YOU NEED HIM? - A young child hires the Team to prove to his parents that the monster under his bed really does exist.

LEASE WITH AN OPTION TO DIE - Patients of Dr. Kivorkian hire the Team to get them out of their contracts.

THE ROAD TO HOPE - The Team is hired to find out the real cause of Whitewater by tracking everything back to the source in Arkansas.

THE HEART OF ROCK N ROLL - The Team find themselves caught up in a grisly adventure when they are hired to recover Huey Lewis' heart from a mad scientist.

BODY SLIM - the other Team members rebel when Face goes on a health kick and puts them all on macrobiotic diets.

BLOOD SWEAT AND CHEERS - The owners of a quaint bar in Boston, where everybody knows your name, hire the Team because the owner of the restaurant upstairs is trying to force them out of business. Guest starring Ted Danson, Shelley Long, Rhea Perlman.

MIND GAMES - Murdock nearly drives the rest of the Team nuts when he decides to perform psychoanalysis on all of them.

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD - Someone has been sending death threats to Mister Rodgers, so he hires the A-Team for protection. Socky returns to help Murdock with the investigation and ends up making a guest appearance on Rodger's TV show.

THE DOCTOR IS OUT - The Team ends up helping a really weird guy known only as "The Doctor" defeat his arch-nemesis, "The Master." (BA- "I knew we shouldn't have gone into that crazy blue box, Hannibal!") Guest starring Tom Baker as The Doctor.

UNCLE BUCKLE-UP - The Team is hired to rid a family of a pesky uncle who won't go away even after he's died. Guest Starring: John Candy (as the Spirit of Uncle Buckle).

WHEEL OF MORALITY - In a special animated episode, the Team is cast with Yakko, Wakko, and Dot Warner to help them escape from the WB Water Tower and defeat Pinky and the Brain's latest plot to take over the world ("Wheel of Morality, turn turn turn. Tell us the lesson that we should learn. And the moral is: I love it when a plan comes together!")

THE A-TEAM IS COMING! THE A-TEAM IS COMING! - (Nope. The only one that comes to mind here is definitely *not* suited for a PG-13 'zine . . .)

MEMBERS ONLY- A fashionable clothing brand is being undercut by counterfeiters, and B.A. becomes a fashion model to expose the frauds.

COWBOY GEORGE -Cattle rustlers and a hyperactive monkey make for an extra-exciting weekend in the country.

WAITING FOR INSANE WAYNE - Murdock gets trapped in Wayne's World and the Team has to go in and break him out.

THE DUKE OF WHISPERING PINES - The long awaited A-Team/Dukes of Hazzard cross over, where Bo and Luke Duke challenge B.A. to a race of souped up vehicles.

BENEATH THE SURFACE - The true reason behind B.A.'s fear of flying finally emerges, and the others realize that there's a lot more to the big guy than they ever knew.

MISSION OF PEACE - The Team is hired to rescue Jim Phelps from a third world prison. Of course the Secretary will disavow any knowledge of their actions.

THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY - The Team is hired to investigate reports of a large furry creature living with a family in the woods. Guest Starring: John Lithgow (as Mr. Henderson).

A LITTLE GOWN WITH AN ACCENT - Tawnia wants to use the Team's hard-earned medals as the

finishing touches on her new party dress, but the guys don't agree.

THE SOUND OF THUNDER - A heavy metal band hires the Team to help them get out of a bad record contract. Guest starring Metallica.

SEASON FIVE

DISHPAN MAN - Desperate for cash to remodel his precious van, B.A. takes on a part time job in a restaurant.

TRIAL BY FIRE- The Team find themselves the object of a modern-day witchhunt in Massachusetts. Will they be able to save themselves from burning at the stake?

FIRING LINE - The Team is sent into investigate unemployment practices in a munitions factory.

QUARTERPOUNDER SNEAK - Is a major fast-food chain packing more than beef in their hamburgers? That's what the Team is hired to find out by a group of disgruntled customers.

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION - Radical religious conservatives are mandating the teaching of Creationism in schools in rural Tennessee. A few open-minded citizens protest, though, and bring in the Team to provide an alternative viewpoint on the origins of man. Based on a true story.

THE SAY UNCLE AFFAIR - Mulder and Scully (Incident at Crystal Lake) are back along with Napoleon Solo and Illya Kuryakin to help the Team unravel the mystery surrounding the Hanoi bank job and to help them get their pardon. Things get really weird when Mulder discovers that it was a space alien who actually shot Colonel Morrison . . .

ALIVE AT FIVE - Stockwell sends the Team to New York to find out why the crew of the local, 5 PM news show have been kidnapped. Special guest stars Al Roker, Sue Simmons, Marv Albert, and Chuck Scarborough.

FAMILY REUNION - The Team regret their decision to accompany Murdock to his family reunion when they discover that his insanity is hereditary.

POINT OF NO RETURN - After completing a mission in Paris, the guys take a few days to relax and explore one of the most beautiful cities in the world. In the caverns under the Opera House, however, they find an old enemy waiting, who has his heart set on tearing Amy away from the men and keeping her for his own.

THE CRYSTAL SKULL - The Team discover that they've hit B.A. over the head one too many times when they go to knock him out and his skull shatters like crystal. Guest starring George Clooney as the ER doctor.

THE SPY WHO MUGGED ME - The Team is hired to find out why James Bond was identified as assaulting a series of buxom young women in Central Park.

THE GREY TEAM -In a "flash-forward" episode, we see they're getting on up there in years, but the A-Team are still willing and ready to help when no one else can.

WITHOUT RESERVATIONS - Faceman finally gets a date with the woman of his dreams only to discover to his horror that he forgot to make dinner reservations . . .



Of Martyrs and Cheeseburgers

by Rhonda Eudaly

Sunshine dappled the lawn of the V.A. Hospital in Westwood, California. The patients of the facility wandered about the place, enjoying the fresh air in various stages of awareness. An orderly and an unfamiliar, attractive woman about thirty years old approached a specific individual. The man sat beneath a tree in the lotus position with his eyes closed. He "ohmed" loudly.

"Mr. Murdock? Mr. Murdock, there's someone here to see you," the orderly said when the man wouldn't acknowledge him.

"Not now, my good man. Can't you see I'm communing with nature here? Nothing can interrupt the pursuit of enlightenment," Captain H.M. Murdock replied without opening his eyes. "Unless, of course, it is the pursuit of the perfect cheeseburger."

The orderly rolled his eyes heavenward and then looked at the woman. "I tried to tell you, lady. You sure you want to try to talk to him?"

The woman nodded. The orderly turned and departed quickly. The woman knelt down beside Murdock. "Captain H.M. Murdock?"

"I am who I am and not who I'm not," Murdock replied without opening his eyes. "And I don't who you are."

"My name is Sid Parker, Captain Murdock. May I talk with you please?" the woman asked softly, urgently.

"You don't sound like any Sid I know," Murdock replied. "And why are you insisting on calling me Captain Murdock?" I haven't been in the Army for years."

"I don't know. That's the only way I know how to call you. Please, will you talk with me? It's important."

"And here I thought I already was talking with you, Miss Parker. How do you know who I am?" Murdock peeked out at her from one eye.

"Do you remember Mickey Parker? You served with him in the war."

"Parker. Parker. Mickey Parker," Murdock mused. Then he jumped to his feet and began to walk away. Sid had to move quickly to catch up with him.

Sid followed Murdock around the hospital grounds for a while without saying anything. Then Murdock turned quickly, forcing Sid to skid to a stop to keep from running headlong into him. Murdock gave her a piercing look, then he began pacing in front of her. "I knew a Mickey Parker in 'Nam. We flew some missions together over Da Nang. We got a couple of platoons out of some real hot spots over there. What's Mickey to you, Sid Parker?"

"Mickey was my older brother, Captain

Murdock," Sid responded promptly.

Murdock stopped pacing. "Was? What do you mean was?"

Sid looked down at her feet. "Mickey died last year. He was a police officer. He was killed in a drug bust."

"What has all that got to do with me?" Murdock asked. "Surely you didn't come all this way just to tell me Mickey died."

"No, Captain Murdock. I came ask for your help."

"How could I possibly be any help to you, Miss Parker?" Murdock asked, gesturing around him. "Take a look around you, I'm not exactly free to do as I please."

"I realize that now, Captain Murdock. I can't tell you why I came here. All I know is when Mickey talked about the war, he talked about you. You saved his life more than once. You meant a lot to Mickey. And he told me once that if I ever needed more help than he could give, to call you." Sid looked at Murdock and impulsively grabbed his hand. "Please, Captain Murdock. I didn't have anyone else to turn to."

Murdock stared at her for a moment, sizing her up, then began pacing once more. "Got to think. Think. Think. Options. Choices." Then he stopped and looked down at Sid's feet. "Billy! Stop that! Stop sniffing the lady's leg! That's not polite. Leave her alone."

Sid looked down quickly. She hadn't felt anything. Then she realized that there was nothing there. "What . . . What are you talking about, Captain Murdock?" she asked hesitantly.

"My dog, Billy. He's right there by your leg. Don't you see him?" Murdock asked.

"Oh, uh, yeah, sure. Of course. Nice pup," Sid answered.

Murdock handed Sid a slip of paper. "Be at that address at two o'clock tomorrow afternoon. We'll meet you there."

Sid checked the address. "We?"

"Sure. Me. Billy. And a few friends." Murdock replied. "It'll be fun. I think you're gonna like them."

"I'm sure I will," Sid agreed hesitantly. "Two o'clock. I'll be there."

The two shook hands. Murdock called Billy to him and he walked back to the building, hands in his pockets and whistling. Sid watched him go, checked the address again, and headed off herself, hoping these friends of his were more substantial than Billy the dog.

Sid arrived at the address Murdock had given her a little early. She wanted the opportunity to check the place out some before the others arrived. It was a little shop on a moderately

busy street. There wasn't much foot traffic, but enough that she didn't feel conspicuous being casually dressed and apparently window shopping on a warm, sunny afternoon. She looked at her watch once more. It was time to meet Murdock. When she looked around to check the area, she noticed two large, burly men in suits who did stick out. She'd seen them before, and they weren't friends.

Sid turned and began walking away. She was fighting the urge to break into a run and hoping they hadn't noticed her. She glanced back after a moment. The men were still there, coming after her. They saw her look back and picked up speed to close the distance. Sid walked faster. She looked back and the men were gaining. She tried to pick up the pace a little more but didn't get far. She ran headlong into someone who reached out to steady her.

When she looked up, it was straight into the clear blue eyes of Templeton Peck. She didn't recognize the extremely handsome, blond man, or the dashing, gray haired man who cut off her escape route to one side. In her confusion and fear, she failed to notice that older man wasn't even looking at her, but past her to the men following her. Nor did she notice the guns at first. Sid was pushed behind Face, though he did keep one hand on her.

"That's her, Colonel. The one I told you about," a familiar voice said right behind her.

Hannibal Smith didn't look at back Murdock, Face, or Sid. He just watched the two men approaching. "Face. Murdock. Pull back. Take the girl with you. Come on, B.A., let's find out why the Welcome Wagon's here."

Hannibal and B.A. Baracus interposed themselves between Sid and the goons in suits. The two men pulled up short when they saw the large, mean-looking, gold-encrusted, heavily-muscled African American man standing in their path. Hannibal watched and pulled out a cigar with his free hand, holding his gun in the other. Hannibal measured their threat potential as he watched them go and put away his gun. He lit his cigar as he turned back to his team.

Sid pulled away from Face and stepped over to Murdock. "I am really glad to see you, Captain Murdock. Thank you for coming."

"Aw, shucks, ma'am. T'wern't nothin.' Besides, I told you I'd be here and I'd bring friends," Murdock said with a grin. "Guys, this is Sid Parker."

"Doesn't look like any Sid I've ever met," Face commented with an appreciative smile.

"You know, I said almost the exact same thing when I met her, too," Murdock replied. "You know, Faceman, great minds really do think

alike."

"Don't ever say that again, Murdock. Don't ever say that."

"Let's go. We should get Miss Parker off the streets, just in case those slime balls get a spine and come back," Hannibal said, leading them into the deserted shop and into the back room.

Face and B.A. immediately fanned out to make sure the room was secure. They both nodded to Hannibal when they were done and holstered their hand guns.

"Why don't you have a seat, Miss Parker, and we'll discuss why you have two goons in \$400 suits chasing you down city sidewalks."

Sid looked around her, still a little uneasy. She continued to stay close to Murdock. She looked at him questioningly.

"It's okay," he told her. "These're my friends. Hannibal Smith, Faceman, and the ugly mudsucker over there is B.A. Baracus. Don't worry, he don't bite . . . much."

B.A. just growled at Murdock.

"If you say so, Captain Murdock," Sid murmured and sat down at a rickety wooden table.

The Team sat down around her. Hannibal studied her a moment, sizing Sid up. "You want to tell us what's going on, Miss Parker?"

"Wait a minute," Face interrupted. "Sid Parker. I know that name. It's been in all the papers. You're connected with Douglas Strickland. Aren't you?"

"Douglas Strickland?" Murdock asked. "Who's that?"

"He's only one of the richest men in town." Face supplied. "He's got his fingers in all the pies in town. He's everywhere. He's doing everything. What's your connection to him?"

"I work with Douglas."

"You told Murdock you needed help. What seems to be the problem?" Hannibal asked.

"I think someone's trying to hurt or kill me," Sid told them.

"Why not just go to the cops?" Hannibal asked.

"Colonel Smith, my brother was a cop after the war. I know how the system works. The cops can't do anything until an actual physical attempt has been made. They haven't done that. Yet. But I can't . . . won't wait until they do."

"But Sid, may I call you Sid?" Face asked her with a winning smile.

"Sure."

"Why us? Surely Douglas Strickland has security."

"Yes, Douglas has nominal security. But I can't trust any of them," Sid replied looking at each man. "But to be perfectly honest with you, I didn't come to you. I came to Captain Murdock.

Mickey told me if I ever got into something over my head and he couldn't help me, I should find him. That's what I did."

"She has a point, Colonel," Murdock agreed. "She came looking for me, not the Team."

"Who's this Mickey guy she's talking about?" Hannibal asked, looking over at Murdock.

"Mickey Parker. Bright kid. Heckuva chopper pilot. I flew with him in 'Nam," Murdock explained. "He was a good man. He told her I saved his life. But he pulled my butt out of the fire a couple of times, too."

"What are you saying, Murdock?" Face asked, looking at Sid.

"I'm saying, if she needs help, then I owe her brother at least that much."

Face smiled at Sid. "You know, for once, Murdock, I'm inclined to agree with you."

"Then it's settled," Hannibal said with a grin. "Miss Parker, you've got yourself the A-Team."

Sid looked around at the men around the old table and wasn't sure how she was supposed to respond. But it was oddly comforting to know that she now had help, even if they weren't exactly traditional in looks or method.

"The first order of business," Hannibal went on after a momentary pause, "is to find out what or who we're up against. And a better place to discuss it in."

"My apartment really isn't very far from here," Sid offered hesitantly. "I suppose we could go there."

"We will have to check the accessibility and security of her place anyway, Hannibal," Face said.

"Fine. We'll go back to your apartment, Miss Parker," Hannibal said, then he looked at B.A. "B.A. get the van."

"What about my car?" Sid wanted to know.

Hannibal thought for a moment. "Take Murdock with you. We'll meet you at your place in a little while."

Murdock turned to the colonel. "Hannibal, could we stop on the way and pick up some burgers?"

"Why, Murdock? You hungry?" Hannibal wanted to know.

"I'm on a quest," Murdock told him.

"Oh, no," Face groaned. "Not another quest. I'm almost afraid to ask. What kind of quest is it this time?"

"I quest and will not rest until I find . . ." Murdock paused to look at each person. "The perfect . . . cheeseburger."

"Cheeseburger?" Face asked. He looked at Hannibal. "Did he just say cheeseburger?"

"He said cheeseburger," Hannibal replied.

"It has been shown that the perfect cheeseburger enhances the pathways to enlightenment, heightens the awareness . . ."

"Clogs the arteries, raises cholesterol levels . . ." Face continued for Murdock. "Only you, Murdock. Only you."

Sid watched all this silently, wondering once more what she's gotten herself into as she gave Hannibal her address.

A short while later, Sid and the Team were sitting in Sid's living room. Murdock was surrounded by fast food containers from all the restaurants that had been along the way to her apartment. He pulled one out and plucked the bun off the top and took a deep sniff. Then he took a big bite of the burger.

"What's that fool doing now?" B.A. demanded.

"He's on a quest," Face answered.

"What's the crazy fool looking for now?"

"Cheeseburgers."

"Cheeseburgers?" B.A. asked. "What does that have to do with anything?"

"It's Murdock," Face replied. "You shouldn't have to ask."

"Nice bouquet. Good texture. A little overdone. The bun's a little crunchy. The lettuce a bit limp. All in all, I give it a 6.5."

Hannibal wandered around the room. "Nice place."

"Yes, it is," Face said, looking around. "You must give me the name of your decorator. This is incredible. I've never seen anything like it."

"Thank you," Sid responded. "I did it myself."

"Really. You have great taste."

Sid headed for the kitchen. "Can I get you gentlemen something? I'm afraid all I have are soft drinks. Coffee, tea . . ."

"Me," Face interrupted.

"Milk, water, soda," Sid continued as if Face hadn't said anything.

"I'll have some milk," B.A. responded.

"Me, too," Murdock called out from the midst of his research.

"The same," Hannibal agreed.

"Nothing for me thanks," Face responded.

Sid brought the drinks and sat down. Hannibal continued to pace the room. "Now, Miss Parker, I think we should get a little more of the story of what's going on."

"Yeah, why would someone want to kill you?" B.A. asked, wiping off his milk mustache.

"You said you worked for Douglas Strickland," Face said.

"It's more accurate to say I work *with* Douglas Strickland," Sid amended, "rather than for

him. "We're equal partners."

"I beg your pardon?" Face asked, eyes getting big as he quickly calculated Sid's net worth.

"It's been a very well kept secret that I believe someone's discovered. I'm a silent partner. I had the money, Douglas had the charm. I needed a front man, Douglas needed the opportunity. I take care of details, Douglas takes care of the press. And we've both gotten along pretty well with that . . . until now."

"Who all knows about your real business relationship with Mr. Strickland?" Hannibal asked.

"Besides those in this room? I would've said only Douglas and our attorney."

"And the two men on the street?" Face prompted.

"I don't know who they are. I've seen them a couple of times in the crowds at a couple of Douglas' public appearances."

"I still don't see why they're after you," B.A. commented.

"Because if they get to me, they kill Douglas' support base, and he falls. He wouldn't recover from that kind of blow. Merely kill Douglas and the whole community has a martyr."

"And martyrs are a lot harder to kill than flesh and blood men," Hannibal finished.

Sid nodded toward Hannibal. "Exactly."

Hannibal looked around. "Good, now that that's done, pack a bag. We're leaving."

"Excuse me? What?" Sid asked, looking around. "It sounded like you said we were leaving."

"We are," Hannibal responded. "You have a problem with that?"

"Yeah, Hannibal. I do," Sid replied. "I was under the impression this wasn't supposed to be obvious."

"Where'd you get that impression?" Hannibal asked.

"But I just can't drop out of sight like that!" Sid exclaimed. "I have obligations, Hannibal. I can't just be gone."

"Well, you can't stay here," Hannibal told her. "It's not safe. Those slime balls found you on a public street. Don't think they won't find this place. And it isn't the most defensible place I've ever seen."

"I understand that, Hannibal," Sid finally said. "But I have places I have to be. Douglas has to know I'm around. There has to be some other way."

"One of us could stay here with her," Face suggested casually. "That way she's got twenty-four hour protection."

Hannibal thought about that. "You know, Face, that could work." Hannibal turned to Sid.

"Are there any empty apartments around here?"

"Actually the place right across the hall is empty. And furnished."

"That'll work out just fine." Hannibal looked at Face. "Face?"

"It should be just a straight scam on the landlord. No problem."

Sid went over to a desk and pulled out a key. She handed it to Hannibal. "Don't bother. I'm the landlord. It's yours as long as you need."

"Well, I guess that takes care of that," Face said, then he turned to the colonel. "I'd like to volunteer for duty over here."

"Do I get a vote?" Sid asked.

"Of course you do," Hannibal said with a slight hint of sarcasm. "You've had a say in everything that's happened so far."

Sid ignored the sarcasm. "Then, and I really appreciate all of this, and no offense to you, Face, but I'd rather have Captain Murdock. If it's all the same."

"Murdock!?" Face, B.A., and Hannibal all exclaimed in various degrees of surprise.

"Me?" Murdock squeaked.

"Why him?" Face demanded.

"With all due respect, Face, you're just too flashy for me. And Captain Murdock is easier to explain, being a friend of Mickey's and all."

"She has a point, Face," Hannibal agreed with an evil grin.

"Well, I suppose so. So what're the rest of us supposed to do, Colonel?" Face demanded.

"Douglas needs a new publicist," Sid offered.

"Sounds right up your alley, Face," Hannibal told him.

"Well, yeah, okay. I guess so," the lieutenant said, somewhat mollified.

"I could try to bring in B.A. in as a security guard," Sid went on hesitantly. "But it'll be tough, and I don't know about you, Hannibal."

"Don't worry about me and B.A.," Hannibal replied. "I have a plan."

"I hate it when he says that," Face muttered.

"He's on the jazz, man," B.A. said, shaking his head. "He's on the jazz."

"Okay, so what's on the agenda?" Hannibal wanted to know.

"The Strickland Foundation is hosting a fund raiser this evening, a gala for the new children's hospital tonight. It's black tie, I'm afraid."

"Invitation only?" Hannibal asked.

"Yes. But I set it up. You'll have no problem getting in," Sid assured him.

"So far, this has been one of the easiest jobs we've ever had," Hannibal muttered. Then he said to Sid, "Don't tell whatever security is in place, we need to evaluate what's there."

"Whatever you say, Colonel," Sid said skeptically. "The gala begins at eight."

"Then we'll go and get ready. Check out the place across the hall. Murdock, stick with her. Face'll get you a tux for the party."

"Oh, do we have to, Colonel? You know how much Billy hates bow ties," Murdock replied.

"I think he'll make an exception this one time, Murdock."

"Is that crazy fool talking to invisible animals again?" B.A. demanded. "How many times do I have to tell you, Murdock, there is no dog!"

Murdock bent over an invisible lump on his lap. "Don't listen to him, Billy. He's just bad tempered."

B.A. was about to attack Murdock when Hannibal called him off. The sergeant went toward the door, shaking his head and muttering "Crazy fool" over and over again.

Sid got to her feet and walked over to the door. "Let me show you the place across the hall."

The rest of the day seemed to fly by with near normal activity. About 7:30 p.m., Sid came out of her room in a dazzling, short, sequined black dress. She fastened one of her earrings as she walked into the room. She came up short, though, when she saw Murdock standing by the glass doors leading out to the terrace. She had to admit he cut a dashing figure in the formal white jacket and black pants.

"Wow," she said. "You look great."

Murdock turned. "You really think so? These suits never seem to feel right. Billy's always having problems with shoulder room."

"You look great." Sid repeated. "Really."

The door opened suddenly. Sid and Murdock turned as one to see Face standing in the doorway. His traditional black tuxedo made him look like a high-demand fashion model. He stopped and stared. A low whistle escaped him.

"Is that for him or for me?" Sid asked with a grin.

"Him who?" Face asked, openly staring at her. "B.A. and Hannibal are already on their way."

"Good. Then shall we go?" Sid picked up her evening bag and headed for the door.

Face and Murdock followed her out. Face leaned over to Murdock. "Sure you can handle this?"

"Of course," Murdock replied in a sophisticated, near British accent. "I am Murdock. H.M. Murdock."

"Oh, no, not the spy routine."

"What routine? Who better to protect a lady in distress than Murdock, H.M. Murdock?"

"Right."

Shortly, the trio were at the party, making the rounds of the room. None of them had seen any sign of B.A. or Hannibal. When Sid asked about them, Face merely responded that they would be there and not to worry. Sid accepted that and then pointed to the tall, well-built, handsome man in his late thirties in a perfectly tailored tuxedo smiling brightly at those around him. An equally stunning woman stood by his elbow, apparently hanging on every word.

"That's Douglas. Over there."

"Who's the lady with him," Face wanted to know.

"His wife, Karen," Sid responded. "Just so you know. Half the people in this room wouldn't mind seeing Douglas' head on a spike."

"And here I thought he was a paragon of the community," Face commented sarcastically.

"He is, but in order to better the community, you sometimes step on some toes. Such is our line of work. Come on, I'll introduce you."

The three made their way through the crowd to where Douglas was standing. "Good evening, Douglas," Sid said.

"Sid! There you are! I've been looking all over for you," Douglas exclaimed. Then he noticed the two men with her. "Who're your friends?"

Sid indicated Face. "This is Templeton Peck. He's our . . . your . . . new publicist. I hired him this afternoon, and thought he might like to see what he was getting into."

"Nice to meet you, Mr. Peck. Welcome aboard," Douglas said, shaking his hand. "This is my wife, Karen."

"A pleasure, Mrs. Strickland."

"Mr. Peck," Karen responded softly.

Sid continued with the introductions. "And this is my . . . my date . . ."

Murdock stepped forward. "Murdock. H.M. Murdock. How do you do, sir? Ma'am?"

Douglas shook his hand. "It's nice to meet you, Mr. Murdock. It's a pleasure to meet any friend of Sid's. Karen and I have often told her she needs to get out more."

"I'll see that she does, Mr. Strickland."

"Oh, Douglas, leave him alone," Sid said playfully. "Now, if you'll excuse us. I'll leave you and Templeton to get acquainted."

Sid and Murdock were just turning away when a commotion at the doorway caused them all to turn around. B.A. and someone who looked too much like Hannibal not to be him - but still wasn't - were arguing with the doorman.

Sid took a step toward the argument. Murdock stopped her with a hand on her arm. "Don't, Sid. Let Hannibal take care of this his way. It's what he does best."

"But . . ." Sid began.

Murdock steered her away from the door. "Come on, let's get you some punch."

"Punch? But, Murdock . . ." Sid protested, as he pulled her away.

"You definitely need punch," Murdock replied.

Back at the door, Hannibal had things well in hand - in his opinion. The doorman had other ideas. "But, sir! You don't have an invitation!"

"An invitation? We don't need an invitation," Hannibal all but shouted in a loud, pompous, flat accent. "My good sir, do you know who this is?"

"Should I?" the doorman asked, bored.

"My good man, this is His Eminence, the Magnate of Bazan. He is welcome at any function," Hannibal intoned. "He wishes to contribute to the welfare of the children."

"You gotta problem with that, Sucka?" B.A. growled.

The doorman looked at B.A., and then at Hannibal. "You may not be admitted without an invitation."

"If you would convey our best wishes to the host, Mr. Strickland."

Douglas suddenly appeared at the doorman's elbow. "What seems to be the trouble?"

The doorman barely looked at Douglas. "These . . . gentlemen do not have an invitation, Mr. Strickland."

Hannibal turned to Douglas. "Mr. Strickland? Douglas Strickland?"

"Yes? Do I know you?"

"I am Devon Haversmith, personal attaché to the Magnate of Bazan. His Eminence just flew in to the country this afternoon and heard about your little to do here benefiting the children's hospital. He wanted to stop by and make a little contribution." Hannibal handed Douglas a check.

Douglas glanced at the check as he folded it and put it in his jacket pocket. "Thank you, your . . . your Eminence, for your generosity. Will you be persuaded to stay for a short while? On behalf of the children?"

"As long as it's for the kids," B.A. said, going into the party.

Hannibal grinned at Douglas' puzzled expression and followed B.A. into the ballroom. Douglas looked back at the doorman and motioned for him to go back to work.

Face had blended into the crowd during the confrontation. At least as well as he was able to, noticing the admiring looks from several of the wealthy ladies around him. His mind was already coming up with some way to use the situation to his advantage.

"Drink, Mr. Peck?" a vaguely familiar voice

asked from his elbow.

Face turned to see Karen Strickland standing beside him with two full champagne flutes. Somehow she seemed different than when he'd first met her. He took the flute she offered him. "Thank you, Mrs. Strickland."

"Call me Karen."

"All right . . . Karen."

She looked him up and down, appraisingly. "And what do people call you, Mr. Peck?"

"Face," he responded. "Is there something I could do for you?"

"I'm sure there is . . . Face," Karen said with a significant look. "Why don't we go someplace more private. To talk about it."

The lieutenant took a quick drink from his glass then discarded it on the nearest table. Karen Strickland took his hand and led him through the crowd. If anyone noticed, no one commented on it or even pretended to see it. Neither one was seen again until the end of the evening when the guests began making their good-byes. Karen once more appeared dutifully attentive at her husband's side.

"Hannibal, I'm telling you, we've got to watch out for that woman," Face to the colonel later that night when the Team gathered in Sid's apartment. He'd untied his tie and loosened his collar. "She's not what she seems."

Sid sat huddled in a jogging suit on one end of her sofa, staring into a coffee cup. "Karen? I don't believe it."

"Believe it," Face told her. "Karen is a totally different person in private."

"What have you done, Face?" Hannibal asked.

"Nothing, Hannibal. Honest," Face replied defensively. "She made the pass at me. Really."

"Uh, huh, Faceman. Right," B.A. snorted sarcastically.

"It's true!" Face exclaimed. "There's a lot more to her than the attentive, supportive, little woman. She's . . . she's . . . I don't know how to put it."

"Crazy, nuts, wacko, psycho?" Murdock offered. "Come on, Faceman, there nothing bad about saying the words. Just look at me. I use 'em all the time. Don't I, Billy?"

Face ignored the reference to the dog. So did everyone else. "No. Not crazy, really. More like mean. I'm telling you, Hannibal, I don't know what it is, but the woman's dangerous. And she hates Sid."

"Me? Why?" Sid asked, sitting up a little with Face's last statement. "Why would Karen hate me? I've never done anything to her."

"Greed," Hannibal said simply, around the cigar clenched tightly in his teeth. His wig and

false mustache lay on the coffee table. "It's simple."

"How so?" Sid asked. "I know I'm not stupid, but I'm not really following this."

Murdock paced around the sofa as he picked up the narrative. "She thinks you stand in her way of a lot of money. She probably believes you've not earned your half of the profits. I assume if one of you dies, the other inherits the whole business?"

"Of course, it's a typical partnership agreement," Sid responded.

"Then without you, it all goes to Douglas," Face said. "And half is hers under community property."

"Get rid of Douglas, and the whole enchilada, muchacha, is hers," Murdock finished.

"Karen?" Sid said, not wanting to believe any of it. "Do you think she'd really be capable of something like this?"

"People have been killed for a lot less," Hannibal responded. "Face, keep an eye on the wife. Let us know if she makes any kind of move. B.A. and I are going to check out a couple of guys we can across at the party. Real hard-nose types with chips on their shoulders."

"Who?" Sid wanted to know.

"Davis Carlton and Rick Messger," Hannibal told her. "You know them?"

"Sure. They're our biggest competitors," Sid explained. "We've stopped a couple of their condo projects from going up in low income areas in favor of affordable housing this year."

"Then they're none too fond of you either."

"Like I said, in this business you make as many enemies as friends." Sid looked at Hannibal. "But they wouldn't know about our partnership."

"There are ways of finding things out like that. Especially if they have inside information."

"Inside information? We're back to Karen, then. Surely you don't think they're connected."

"We'll find that out," Hannibal said, getting to his feet. "Meantime, it looks like we've got some snakes in our grass. Let's kick over some rocks and see what slithers out."

The Team moved to join the colonel. He stopped Murdock. "Captain, I need you to stay here. Protect Sid in case someone tries to make a move while we're not looking."

"Okey dokey, Colonel. Will do."

Sid sat silently on the sofa as the other three left for their place across the hall. Murdock locked the door behind them and came back to where she sat staring off into space. He sat down and tried to get her to look at him.

"You okay, Sid?" he finally asked her.

"I don't know," she answered in a small voice. "I think this is really starting to get to me, Murdock. I'm scared."

"It's going to be all right, kiddo," Murdock told her softly, pulling her around enough to get his arm around her. She shifted enough for the embrace to be comfortable. "We're not going to let anything happen to you."

"Promise?"

"Cross my heart and hope to have space hamsters in my blood stream."

"What?" she asked with a slight laugh, tilting her head a little to look up at him.

"Just something we say down at the V.A.," Murdock said, meeting her eyes. "Seriously, though, Hannibal's got a plan. And nobody, but nobody, gets by me and Billy. Just trust us and don't be surprised by anything that happens."

"After tonight, I don't think anything could surprise me anymore," Sid said with a sigh. "By the way, what exactly is a Magnate of Bazan?"

"That's just Hannibal on the jazz," Murdock told her.

Sid woke up the next morning to the smell of brewing coffee and cooking food. She looked around, momentarily disoriented. She hadn't remembered falling asleep the night before, and it took her a minute to recall why someone would be in her kitchen cooking while she was in bed. Then it all came back to her. She hurriedly got up and went out to the kitchen, tying her bathrobe as she went.

Murdock was puttering around the kitchen, talking with Billy, when Sid entered. The neatly folded bedding on the couch had barely registered as she'd gone by it. "What is all of this?" she wanted to know.

"Billy and me decided to make you breakfast this morning," Murdock told her, holding out a cup. "Coffee?"

Sid took the cup and gratefully drank. "This is perfect. How'd you know this was how I liked my coffee?"

"I noticed how you drank it last night. It reminded me of Mickey. He drank his coffee the same way back in Nam."

A quick shadow passed over Sid. "I'd forgotten that. But you're right. Mickey did drink it like this." She paused for a moment, then looked at Murdock. "Can I tell you something?"

"Sure. You can tell me anything. And don't worry about Billy. He won't tell anyone either."

Sid smiled at that. She was getting used to the references to the invisible dog. "You've made a real impression on the Parker family, Murdock. First on my brother. He never talked about the war much, but he always talked about you. Now I know why. You've made an impression on me,

too."

"Then it's mutual. Because the Parker family has made a big impression on me. And Billy. Mickey was a good guy. And his sister isn't so bad herself. You hungry?"

Sid took the change in subject in stride. "Starved. What've we got?"

An hour later, Murdock dropped Sid off at her office. There were streams of people going in and out of the building as he opened the door for her. "Okay, we've got to make this believable for anyone who might be watching." That was Sid's only warning before Murdock kissed her in such a way that made her toes curl, her eyes cross, and drove out any thought of business. "See you at lunch."

"Yeah, right," she said breathlessly as he skipped back around the car and threw her a jaunty wave before driving off.

Sid was still trying to focus her eyes as she punched the elevator button. She didn't even see Face next to her until he spoke. "Good morning, Miss Parker."

"What? Oh, yes, hello, Mr. Peck. Right on time for your first day," she said with a goofy, little smile. "I'm sure you're going to enjoy working with us." She didn't see the questioning look Face gave her as he followed her into the elevator.

Sid went through the morning in a distracted daze. She did her work automatically to the point that even Douglas noticed it when they met mid-morning.

"So, I take it your date last night turned out to be more than you expected," Douglas commented. Sid didn't respond, so Douglas tried a different tack. "And I thought he looked pretty good for a guy with two heads and four arms."

"What?" Sid asked, finally hearing him.

"Good, you're back with me," Douglas teased. "I was hoping you'd come back to Earth before lunch."

"Lunch? What about lunch?"

"The lunch with the station manager of KNNP about co-sponsoring our fund raiser for the civic improvements project." Douglas looked at her. "Don't tell me you forgot."

"All right then, I won't tell you," Sid said with a grin.

"Bring him along, then. And I'll call Karen. Oh, and let's bring that new publicist, what's his name? Peck?" Douglas went on. "He might as well start now with the PR."

"Absolutely. I'm sure Mr. Peck would love to join us."

Meanwhile, Hannibal and B.A. were entering the offices of Carlton and Messger dressed at technicians. Hannibal went straight over to the

young, perky, receptionist. "Can I help you?" she asked.

"We're here to fix the SVW-3000," Hannibal responded.

"The what?"

"The SVW-3000. Got a work order right here." He thumped his clipboard for emphasis. "Probably the power supply. Got a defective shipment from the manufacturer. Been working on two or three of these a day for the past three weeks. Shouldn't take too long."

Hannibal swept past the confused girl before she could respond. B.A. curled his lip at her as he went past, and she sat down without a word. They passed no one in the hallway and were in luck. The file room was the first open door on the right, and it was empty. They ducked inside and locked the door behind them and started going quickly through the files.

"You mind telling me what we're looking for, Hannibal?"

"Anything suspicious, B.A., that could link these two to the slime balls on the street or to Mrs. Strickland."

"There ain't gonna be nothin' here, man," B.A. told him. "You think they'd be dumb enough to leave stuff like that in the files?"

"We've come across dumber guys before."

They searched for a few more minutes before Hannibal called a halt. "There's nothing here."

"I told you."

Hannibal went back to the door and unlocked it. He opened it enough to glance out in each direction. Then he opened the door all the way and motioned for B.A. to follow. They went further into the maze of offices. The place was pretty much deserted at that hour of the morning, and no one questioned their presence. They came to an intersection in the corridor. Hannibal could barely hear the sounds of a conversation. He motioned silently for B.A. to follow him as he headed toward the sounds. Hannibal stopped in front of a closed door and listened. He looked back at B.A. and pointed to the next door down. The two men slipped into an empty office next door.

B.A. closed the door as Hannibal went over to the wall adjoining the office with the voices. He pulled a listening device with a small recorder out of the tool box he sat on the desk. He attached one end of the device to the wall, pressed the record button and tucked the other end into his ear. He positioned himself with his back to the door so no one could see the recorder. B.A. went to the telephone and pretended to work on it, just in case someone came in and challenged their presence.

In the next room Davis Carlton sat at his

desk, and looked at the person across from him. "Do you really think this is a good idea? I thought we agreed just to take care of Sid Parker. You didn't want anything done about him. Just her."

"I know," Carlton's companion agreed. "But I've changed my mind. Especially if they both go in something tragic like an accident or an attempted robbery. Then we both get what we want." Suddenly a beeper went off. Carlton's companion checked the number. "Mind if I use your phone?"

"Certainly." Carlton handed the phone over.

Karen Strickland dialed a number familiar to her. It was answered quickly. "Yes, Darling, it's me. What is it? Lunch? All right. The Stonemason at noon. I'll be there. I love you, too."

"Do you have to do that here?" Carlton asked, replacing the phone in its original position.

"I had to call him back. He'll never know I was here, Davis. And you know they're only words. At least to him. Remember, we're in it for the money."

"The plan was never to kill Strickland. Just to ruin him," Carlton protested.

"But I've had a change of heart, Davis. The widow of a martyr holds a lot more weight than the ex-wife of a ruined businessman." Karen looked into Carlton's eyes. "And think of what it will mean for you, Davis, when you step in to fill Douglas' shoes with my support after he's dead. See the future for what it can be."

Hannibal disconnected his listening device and shut off the recorder. He quickly packed everything back in the tool box. B.A. finished his fake repairs of the telephone. The two slipped out into the hallway. They had just rounded the corner when the door to Carlton's office opened, and its occupants went down the hallway in the opposite direction.

"What now, Hannibal?" B.A. asked as they left the building.

"We've got to get over to the office and try to link up with Face and Murdock. They're going to try to hit Sid and Strickland at the same time."

Despite B.A.'s expert driving skills, they still missed the others at Sid's office. They'd already left for their lunch meeting. Hannibal was only slightly relieved to discover that Murdock and Face had gone with them. That fact didn't keep B.A. from pushing his van to its limits to get to the restaurant.

"Mr. Strickland, your table's ready," the hostess told the group of four. "If you'll follow me, please."

The group followed the young lady to a quiet table in the corner. "There are two more in our party, my wife, and a Ms. Lewis," Douglas told her.

"I'll make sure they're seated as soon as they arrive," the hostess assured him.

Douglas looked at Face. "So, how are you enjoying your first day, Mr. Peck?"

"It's very nice. I do have some ideas on how to get you more positive exposure," Face began as a waiter began pouring water. The waiter bumped Face. He looked up to protest and tried not to react as he recognized Hannibal in one of his disguises. Hannibal motioned for a meeting. "But first," Face covered himself, "I need to find the little executives room. Excuse me."

Murdock looked up at that and also recognized Hannibal in the waiter's disguise. Hannibal signaled him to stay with the table. Sid pretended not to notice the strange exchange and made sure Douglas didn't notice it either.

Face stopped right outside the restrooms. B.A. was there waiting for him, and Hannibal came right up behind him. "Hannibal, what's this all about? What's with the disguise? He doesn't know you."

"But he might remember Devon Haversmith. I didn't want to take that chance." Hannibal pulled out a cigar. "Besides, you were right about the wife. Except she isn't so much a snake as a Black Widow."

"You have proof?"

"I have tape. She and Carlton are in cahoots with each other. They've now decided that they want a martyr. They're going to try to hit them both, at the same time. We've got to make sure that doesn't happen. Make sure Murdock gets the message. After this, they're never to be together. If they can't get them both at the same time, maybe they'll do something stupid."

"Maybe? What kind of word is maybe, Hannibal?"

"Don't worry, Face," Hannibal said with a grin. "I've got a plan."

"Somehow, I was afraid of that." Face shook his head. "I better get back before they miss me."

"I hear the chicken is really good here."

"The chicken. Right." Face rolled his eyes and went back to the table. One hand strayed to the small of his back ever so briefly to feel the cool steel of his nine millimeter in his waistband.

Karen and Ms. Lewis, the KNNP station manager, had arrived while Face had met with Hannibal. The only seat left was between Karen and Ms. Lewis. He made polite introductory noise as he sat down. He flashed Murdock a look that only the captain could have interpreted. The

captain straightened up a little.

Once everyone had ordered, Douglas swung right into business with Ms. Lewis. Face smiled at her, but kept an eye on the door. That was until he felt something rub up against his leg right under his pant cuff. He jerked his leg and hit his knee on the underside of the table. Everyone turned to look at him. Face swallowed hard. "Sorry, muscle spasm."

Conversation went back to business. Face sneaked a glance in Karen's direction. She looked quickly in his direction and winked. He swallowed again. Then the foot was back. This time he didn't react nearly as obviously. He was, however, very glad when the food came. The conversation lagged momentarily while people ate. The meal was over not long thereafter. Face breathed a small sigh of relief that nothing had happened. They made a move for the door.

"Oh! Oh, no," Karen groaned. "I must've dropped my keys. I have to go back and look for them."

"Want me to help you look for them, Darling?" Douglas asked.

"No, no. That's all right. You go on with Sid and Ms. Lewis. Perhaps, though, Mr. Peck . . . ?"

"Uh, no. I mean . . ." Face stuttered.

"Go ahead, Peck. You can catch up with us."

Against his better judgment, Face turned back. Just then two men in ski masks burst into the restaurant pointing guns. "Everyone stand back. We want all the money and jewelry and no one gets hurt!" They went straight to Douglas and Sid. "I think we'll start with you."

"No, I don't think so," Murdock spoke up.

"And who's gonna stop us? You?" the first man asked.

"Yeah, me," Murdock said, stepping up to the first gunman, making sure Sid was well back. Then he pulled his gun. "And my buddy here."

The second man started to make a move when the sound of a cocking gun made him stop. He looked sideways to see Face holding a chrome plated 9 mm a couple of inches from his ear. "I wouldn't do that if I were you. Two against one isn't quite fair, don't you think?"

"Okay, fellas. Let's put the guns on the hostess stand there and take a hike," Murdock barked at the two men.

"Why should we?" one of the gunmen asked.

"Because if you don't, it's gonna get really nasty," Hannibal said from behind them.

The two men whirled around to see Hannibal and B.A. behind them holding automatic rifles. Just to prove they were serious, B.A. fired off a couple of rounds into the ceiling. The two gunmen dropped their guns and started to run. But not be-

fore Murdock got a hold of one of the masks. It came off in his hand. He heard Sid gasp. He looked again as the man ran out the door. It was the man from the street.

"Come on, Sid. We're going out the back," Murdock said, putting his gun back in his pants. Hannibal and B.A. had already left.

Face grabbed Douglas' arm, and smiled apologetically at the station manager. "Excuse us, we've got to go now. Everything's just fine. We'll be in touch." He hustled Douglas out the back door.

"Wait! What's going on?" she called after them.

Murdock ushered Sid into B.A.'s van. Face and Douglas followed them in and closed the door. Hannibal and B.A. were already waiting for them. As soon as the door was closed, the van pulled out with a chirp of the tires.

"What was all of that?" Douglas finally demanded.

"That was what is commonly known as attempted murder," Murdock told him calmly.

"What?!" Douglas demanded. "Would someone mind telling me what's going on?"

"Sid recognized that guy. We all did. Those were the clowns who came after Sid on the street yesterday. They're hired guns," Murdock answered. "They came after the two of you, specifically."

"Why both of us, Murdock?" Sid asked. "I thought they were only after me."

"There's been a change of plans," Hannibal told her. "They're after both of you now."

"Who?" Douglas demanded. "Who's after us? Who are you?"

"Douglas, these men . . . they're . . . I . . ."

"We're The A-Team, Mr. Strickland. Miss Parker asked us to look into a personal security matter she was having. Only now it involves you," Hannibal told him.

"I thought you said he was a friend of your brother's," Douglas said to Sid, pointing to Murdock.

"Murdock is a friend of my brother, Douglas," Sid told him. "Was. And I've asked them to help me."

"I don't need their help," Douglas protested. "Pull over. I want out of here."

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," Hannibal told him. "Until today, Sid was the only target. That has changed."

"Who? What are you talking about?" Douglas demanded.

"Just listen, Mr. Strickland," Hannibal snapped. He picked up a small tape recorder and played the recording he made of the Karen and Carlton's conversation. He watched for reactions.

Sid bit her lip and unconsciously reached out for Murdock's hand. Douglas just went still. Any semblance of animation drained from his face with the color. His finger nails left marks in the armrests of his seat.

"Where did you get this?" he asked coldly, emotionlessly.

"From Davis Carlton's office. She was there this morning."

"Stop the van," Douglas said through clenched teeth.

"I don't think . . ."

"STOP THIS VAN!!!!" Douglas shouted. "Now."

The tires squealed as B.A. slammed on the brakes. The van slid to a stop on the side of the road. The side door opened and Douglas jumped out.

"Douglas, please, don't do this," Sid pleaded. "It's not safe."

"I appreciate your concern, Sid. Really. And that of your friends. But I have to be alone right now. I have to think. I'll see you back at the office." Douglas looked at Sid. "It'll be all right."

Murdock pulled Sid back into her seat as Face closed the door. B.A. pulled back out into traffic. Douglas looked around and began walking.

Sid paced her office while the Team relaxed. "Where is he?" she demanded. "We shouldn't have left them out there."

"He made his choice," Hannibal told her.

"What if they found him? He could be dead by now," Sid stormed.

Before anyone could respond, Sid's phone rang. She pounced on her phone. "Sid Parker! Douglas, is that you?" The Team all sat up a little more alertly as she listened to the other end of the conversation. "Douglas, calm down, I can't understand you. Where are you?"

Hannibal stepped over and turned on the speaker phone. Douglas was babbling almost incoherently, but he managed to spit out an address. Hannibal looked at B.A. The larger man nodded. Hannibal nodded to Sid. "We're on our way, Douglas. Hang tight."

The Team was already moving as she hung up the phone. She started out with them. Murdock headed out back first. "Stay here, muchacha, we'll bring him back."

"I'm going with you."

"That would play right into their hands, Sid. They want nothing more than to have the both of you together," Murdock tried to explain.

"Murdock! Let's go," Hannibal called from the corridor.

Sid looked at Murdock and then the hallway. "You heard the colonel, Murdock. Let's go.

We're wasting time." She ducked around him and was gone, leaving him to follow behind.

They found Douglas at a back table in a dank, dark little bar not far from where they'd left him. He'd apparently been drinking since the time he'd left the van. Sid went straight to him. The Team covered the room. No one commented on the weapons. And Hannibal persuaded the owners and employees of the place to close early.

"Douglas? Are you all right?"

"I loved her, you know, Sid. I really loved her. And all she wanted was my money. Our money. She'd even be willing to kill for money. Doesn't she have all she could possibly want? What more could she want?"

"I don't know, Douglas. Not everyone has the same kind of heart that you do. Different things motivate different people. This isn't your fault."

"Heads up, Hannibal. Bogeys comin' in at three o'clock," Murdock announced. "Two sedans. Brains and brawn. Whole shootin' match."

"B.A., take the right. Face, you got the left. Murdock, get those two down and cover the back. I've got the front door."

Murdock went over to Douglas and Sid. "Looks like our friend here made more than one phone call. Get down and stay down until it all blows over." He gripped Sid's arm and made her look him in the eyes. "Don't do anything crazy. That's my job."

"I won't do anything crazy," Sid told him. "I promise."

"Cross your heart."

"And hope to get space hamsters in my blood." Sid smiled at him. "Take care of yourself."

"Thata girl. Get down now and stay down." He pointed to Douglas. "Make sure he keeps his head down."

Sid and Douglas dove under the table and didn't move. Murdock went to his position. A single gun shot announced the beginning of what would prove to be a heated battle. Gunfire was exchanged. The cars the goons came in were turned into so much scrap metal, and the bar was reduced to a windowless, wooden block of Swiss cheese.

"I'm runnin' low on ammo, Hannibal," B.A. called out from his position.

"Well, if we are, then so are they," Hannibal commented. "We've got to make one last stand and show these slime balls they can't push people around." He looked around. "Face, give me your lighter. Murdock, find the cheapest, nastiest booze you can find back there. And some rags."

Murdock tossed him a couple of bottles and two filthy rags. Hannibal caught them handily. He stuffed the rags into the necks of the bottles and lit the rag. The residue on the rags made them catch quickly. Hannibal counted slowly to five then hurled the first bottle out. It shattered on the hood of the car and exploded. The same happened with the second car. Immediately the two goons along with Carlton were surrendering and coughing the smoke of the fires. Nothing was seen of Karen.

The Team took the three into the bar and tied them up. Murdock left a note on Carlton's jacket explaining who they were when the police showed up. They could hear the sirens faintly in the background. The group left out the back of the bar and started toward the van. Sid stayed close to Murdock. Douglas was off in his own little world. Until Karen stepped out from behind the van with a gun aimed at Douglas.

"You should've had the good sense to die, Douglas," she spat.

"Karen?"

Four guns were instantly aimed at Karen Strickland. "Put the gun down, Mrs. Strickland," Hannibal warned. "Your friends have been caught and the police are on their way. We have you on tape. It's over."

"Not yet." Karen flicked a glance at Face. "You were in on it all along?"

"You never asked," Face told her.

Suddenly there was a movement and B.A. was behind her, forcing the gun up and out of harm's way. Hannibal relieved her of it. "Greed is an ugly thing." Then B.A. took her in with the rest. Hannibal looked at the other Team members and grinned. "Don't you love it when a plan comes together?"

The next afternoon, the Team was once more gathered in Sid's apartment, but this one time the atmosphere was much less tense. Sid brought in drinks and sat down on the couch next to Murdock. "Murdock's told me about you guys. That you do this for a living. I know you took me on as a favor to him, but I can't let it go at that. I have more than I could ever need. I want to pay you for your help."

"I told her we didn't want her money." Murdock told the group.

"You did what?!" Face exclaimed.

"I told her we didn't want her money," Murdock repeated.

"But I insist. I've already made substantial donations to a charity each in your name. B.A., your day care center will be getting it's new playground. Murdock's went to the V.A. Hospital. Face, the orphanage will be getting a new roof. Hannibal . . . yours was the hardest, but there's a

nursing home for aging actors. Murdock and I thought your contribution should go there."

The Team was at a loss for words, but Sid wasn't through yet. She handed Face an envelope. "And as for me, if you won't accept payment for helping me. I hope that covers the next person who comes along who can't afford to pay for your services. It's the least I can do."

Face opened the envelope and whistled. He nodded as he closed the envelope. He held out the keys to the apartment across the hall. "I suppose we should give these back."

"Keep them. You never know when they'll come in handy again. Besides, I'm picky about my neighbors."

"You've been more than generous, Sid," Hannibal said. "Thank you."

"No, thank you. You've given me my life back. What's a little money where that's concerned?"

B.A., Face, and Hannibal said their good-byes and headed for the door. They looked back at Murdock. "Um, I'm gonna stick around for a little bit. Sid'll get me back to the V.A." The rest of the Team nodded and left.

"I have something for you, Murdock," Sid told him when they were alone. She pulled out a small box. "These were Mickey's. But I think he would've wanted you to have them."

Murdock took the box. He pulled out a Purple Heart and a couple of photographs from Viet Nam. He was in them with Mickey. He looked at her. "You sure you want to give me these?"

"He said if it hadn't been for you getting him out of his chopper, I would've gotten that medal in the mail instead of him bringing it home." Sid looked at Murdock. "He would've wanted you to have it."

Sid embraced Murdock and he kissed her. She pulled back to look at him. "I know this is so long, but I hope it isn't good-bye."

"I don't get out this way very often."

"The V.A. isn't that far away. Can I come visit?"

"Anytime you want."

"Oh, and I have one more thing for you."

"What?"

"Come with me." Sid led Murdock into the kitchen and presented him with a plate.

"What's this?" Murdock said, taking off the lid. His eyes lit up. "A cheeseburger!"

"You didn't have much time for your quest."

Murdock bit into the burger and his eyes rolled up into his head. "A truly inspiring cheeseburger. I can feel the enlightenment already."

"Oh, Murdock. You're too much."

"Yeah, but you gotta love it."

THE A-TEAM FAN-FICTION INDEX

Compiled by N. N. Pellegrini, with help and information from: Scott Clark, Janet Byrne-Kaniuk, Roberta Chi-Woon Kwong, Donna Foster, Brenda Grant, Sonja Horstmann, Laura Michaels, Barbara Musser, C.M. Nutting, Rita Ractliffe, Jenna Russell, Peg Waugh.

This index lists information about any and all fan-written stories including characters from the A-Team that have appeared in fandom print, as well as fanzines containing information articles about the A-Team. How complete this list is, I am not sure; it has, however, been in the makings for over two years now. Much thanks to all the people listed above who helped me locate stories, supplied me with copies of 'zines and stories that were out of print, or let me know about their own publications. Supplements to this index will be included in future issues of PLANS SCAMS AND VANS, and will also be found on the internet at <http://www.seas.upenn.edu/~pelleagri/index.html> (where this list initially appeared.)

SECTIONS

SECTION 1 lists 'zines that contain only or predominantly A-Team material.

SECTION 2 lists individual stories from multi-media 'zines or crossovers with the A-Team that appeared in 'zines dedicated to other fandoms. I try to give brief plot descriptions of all the individual stories in Section 2 and of the longer pieces in Section 1.

SECTION 3 lists other 'zines I know contain *some* A-Team material, either stories or articles or letters of comment, but I don't have detailed information on their specific content at this time.

SECTION 4 lists the addresses of different 'zine editors, publishers, and dealers that are mentioned in this index. These are the people you should contact if you would like more information on a given title and if it's still available or not.

SYMBOLS

The following symbols are listed next to certain 'zines/stories :

* Means that in my opinion, it's an exceptionally good story, at least compared to the other A-Team 'zine stories I've read. Definitely worth checking out if you can find it. Not that the other stuff is necessarily bad, but these are ones I especially enjoyed. Your Mileage May Vary.

! Means this zine is still available to the best of my knowledge, either through a current print run or a reprint. See the Section 4 you wish further ordering info.

? Means I have only seen mention of this zine or story, perhaps in a zine catalog or flyer, but neither I nor one of the other contributors to this list has verified its contents.

:-) Means I would be eternally grateful if someone had a copy of this 'zine for sale, or for temporary loan, or knows where it might still be available.

/ Means the title refers to a "slash" story or zine, involving (usually) explicitly-described relationships between members of the same sex. Such zines generally require an age statement with ordering as the material is intended for mature audiences only.

SECTION 1: A-TEAM ZINES

? A IS FOR ACTION

August '87?

From J. Hoffmann. Advertisements asking for contributions to this 'zine appeared in several issues of the TAT APPRECIATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER (see below), also stating that it would be printed in '87. I do not know if it ever actually was published.

ABOUT FACE

(55 pages)

From Halo Press

A-Team/Battlestar Gallactica 'zine, focused mainly on Face & Starbuck. All stories by Susan Taylor and Sarah Tindall.

- "The Last Twelve Years" (16 pages). Has Face been the one locked up in a mental hospital for twelve years, while the rest of the Team led normal lives?
- "A Pizza The Action" (9 pages). Face wants to prove that he hasn't "lost his touch."
- "One More Time Again" (15 pages). Adventure story based on what might have happened if Face *hadn't* made it to the chopper in "One More Time" and had to be rescued.
- "Christmas Crackers" (5 pages). It's Christmas and Face is sick with the flu - or is he?
- "Fools Rush In" (11 pages). Murdock is accused of killing someone at the V.A. - has he been set-up as part of a larger crime?

! THE A-FILES

(116 pages)

Printed October '96, Sockii Press

All A-Team/X-Files crossovers.

- "Strange Bedfellows" by Irene Snyder Schwarting (14 pages). Mulder hires the A-Team to find Scully at a secret military base.
- "Agenda" by Brandon Kaonohi (18 pages). Mulder and Scully investigate the A-Team's connection to a UFO supposedly recovered in Viet Nam.
- "The X Degrees of Separation" by Michele Lellouche (3 pages). Chart comparing connections between the A-Team and the X-Files.
- "Through the Thin Veil" by N. N. Pellegrini (78 pages). A Nowhere Man/AT/XF story. Tom Veil hires the A-Team to track down the Conspiracy on St. Kitts.

THE A-TEAM FILE #1

(50 pages)

Printed October '83, AAA Press

Information as well as fiction. Stories include:

- "Ah, Colonel Lynch! How Nice to See You Again!" by Linda Hepden (12 pages). A Knight Rider/AT crossover.
- "Technicolor Starts Here" by J. A. Mortimore (3 pages).
- "Dialogue: Black Day at Bad Rock" by J. A. Mortimore (5 pages).
- "Just a Little Liberation" by Jita (4 pages).
- "Chance Encounter" by Linda Hepden (1 page).
- "An Undercover Story" by C. C. Connors (4 pages).

THE A-TEAM FILE #2

(52 pages)

Printed April '84, AAA Press

Information as well as fiction. Stories include:

- "Just Passing Through" by C. S. Armitage (14 pages). Rather amusing little adventure story.
- "Goodbye, Ruby Tuesday" by A. S. Lawrence (4 pages).
- "Hook, Line and Sinker" by Sally Jones (5 pages).
- "Incident in a Death Camp" by Janet Ellicott (4 pages).
- "Home Thoughts from a Broad" by J. A. Mortimore (3 pages).
- "'Twas the Night Before Christmas" by A. S. Lawrence (5 pages).

THE A-TEAM FILE #3

(55 pages)

Printed April '85, AAA Press

- "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?" by Theda (4 pages).
- "Safe and Secure" by C. S. Armitage (4 pages).
- "Birdman" by Stephanie Lucas (1 page).
- "Every Dog Has Its Day" by D. Fittes (1 page).
- "Black is Beautiful" by Sally Jones (17 pages). A Knight Rider crossover.
- "A Look Inside" (1 page).

- "Saigon - An Eye-Witness Account" by Judy Wrighton (3 pages).
- "Well, Maybe Next Year" by Loot (7 pages) . Strange story about the Team at an unusual hotel . . .

*** THE A-TEAM FILE #4** (54 pages) Printed March '86, AAA Press
"Mary's Boy Child" by J. A. Mortimore. This 'zine is one long story, and a good one too. The Team is stuck with two female-tag-alongs this time, along with Amy, as they travel to Gothinia to rescue a kidnapped child. Humor/action-oriented.

CLOSED FOR REMODELING #1 (105 pages) Printed July '86, Jackie Edwards

- "Never Turn Your Back" by Lori Beatty (6 pages). Set during the "Curtain Call" episode.
- "Circumstantial Evidence" by Jackie Edwards (38 pages). In which Murdock is suspected of having an affair with . . . Maggie?
- "Mistaken Identity" by Mary Hughes (25 pages). Does Murdock have a forgotten past in Texas, and a son he never knew about?
- * "Shadows in the Rain" by Michele Lellouche (11 pages). Great Team story about the guys hiding out in the Florida swamps trying to avoid Fulbright (Reminiscent of Nam.)
- * "Something on the String of G" by Lori Beatty (19 pages). This is the infamous Team gets 10% of Chippendales story. Murdock hams it up as a Chippendales dancer.

CLOSED FOR REMODELING #2 (119 pages) Printed '87, Jackie Edwards

- "Too Bad Howling Mad" by Mary Hughes (32 pages). After a car accident Murdock loses his memory, and isn't too sure he wants it back.
- * "Things that go Bump in the Night" by Denise Sheets (27 pages). The Team take on a mysterious case at a southern prison.
- "The Date" by Jackie Edwards (7 pages). Same as "Prom Night," described below under the ON THE JAZZ listings.
- "Visiting Day" by Lori Beatty (9 pages). Kelly visits Murdock at the V.A.
- "The Devil . . . & Decker Too" by G. Brennan (15 pages). Hannibal and Decker are both given offers they can't refuse . . . or can they?
- "Night Thoughts" by Jeanette Hoffman (1 page).
- "Almost Like Being in Love" by Lori Beatty (7 pages). Amy remembers her first night with Murdock - at the V.A. Hospital.
- "Revenge" by Jackie Edwards (15 pages). The bad guy from the episode "The Island" returns to get revenge on Hannibal.

CLOSED FOR REMODELING #3 (94 pages) Printed by Jackie Edwards

- "Children of Bad Rock" by Joy Baker (14 pages). A story using every title of every single A-Team episode.
- "Murdock's Miracle" by Gwen Brennan (16 pages). A mysterious man may be the only one who can save Murdock's life and keep the Team from being captured.
- * "Just One of Those Days" by Rita Ractliffe (14 pages). An accident during a camping trip results in a near-death situation for Maggie.
- * "Enterprise Incident" by Lori Beatty and Sue Keenan (17 pages). An A-Team/Star Trek crossover also involving the real-life actors.
- "Teamwork" by Lori Beatty (26 pages). After "A Nice Place to Visit," recollections from Hannibal on how he met each of the Team members.

CLOSED FOR REMODELING #4 (90 pages) Printed by Jackie Edwards

- "The Vessel" by Jackie Edwards (25 pages). Is Dr. Maggie Sullivan possessed by an evil spirit? Looks like the Team will have to find out. Weird.
- "Pasadena Murdock" by Michele Lellouche (21 pages). UNAUTHORIZED version of this story, which had been withdrawn from publication. See listing below in Section 2; the official version is available in the 'zine DISTASIS.
- "One Small Step" by Lori Beatty (15 pages). Reflections from each of the Team members before/during 'Nam.
- * "Assignment Tardis" by Elizabeth Hensley (19 pages). One of my favorite fan stories, a Dr. Who crossover. Can Murdock successfully pilot the space shuttle and bring it down to safety? Uh-oh . . .
- "Aftermath" by Jackie Edwards (3 pages). Stockwell & Carla "adult" piece, after "The Say Uncle

"Affair." Also appeared in OPEN FOR BUSINESS (see below).

FACE THE ENEMY (51 pages) From Halo Press

A-Team/Battlestar Gallactica 'zine, focused mainly on Face & Starbuck.

- "Revelations" by Susan Taylor (12 pages). At last we learn the truth about Hannibal's antecedents.
- "The Choice" (6 pages, Galactica)
- "The Opera Ain't Over" by Sarah Tindall (31 pages). The A-Team in Decker's clutches at last - but is all as simple as it seems?

FACE THE MUSIC (67 pages) From Halo Press

A-Team/Battlestar Gallactica 'zine, focused mainly on Face & Starbuck. All stories by Susan Taylor and Sarah Tindall.

- "Gabrielle" (28 pages). A young brother and sister operative team is used by the military to capture the guys. Are they as good as they say they are?
- "Like Father Like Son" (poem)
- "There's Something About A Jungle" (17 pages). There's something a little peculiar about the woman who's hired the A-Team to find her brother in the South American jungles . . .
- "Home To Roost" (4 pages). 5th season. Just how *did* Murdock know what BA and Face said while they were awaiting execution?
- "The Blue Crystal" (18 pages, Galactica).

FACE TO FACE (52 pages) From Halo Press

A-Team/Battlestar Gallactica 'zine, focused mainly on Face & Starbuck.

- "Blind Reason" by Susan Taylor (12 pages). Yet another Face-is-blinded-in-an-accident story.
- "Templeton Peck" by Sarah Tindall (4 page biography). Summary of all the information on Face's background as presented on the show.
- "Monday's Child" by Sarah Tindall (16 pages). Story of how Face originally joined the Team.
- "Absent Without Leave" (20 pages, Galactica).

FACE VALUE (52 pages) From Halo Press

A-Team/Battlestar Gallactica 'zine, focused mainly on Face & Starbuck.

- "Up For Grabs" by Susan Taylor (24 pages). Face is captured while on a case and the Team must find him and save him. Also get to see Face as an exotic dancer in a ladies' club.
- "Face's Freudian Fantasy" by Sarah Tindall (23 pages). Okay, definitely gets the awards for *weirdest* plot idea I've ever come across - Face wakes up one day to find out he's been transformed into a horse. Too bad the story is really actually quite boring . . .
- "What Do You Think Of It So Far?" by Susan Taylor (5 pages, poll results). Summary of reader's polls after ABOUT FACE (see above).

!/ LEADING A HORSE TO WATER (95 pages) Printed October '87, PP Press

Available as reprint from New Leaf Press. One long story by Flipper. Hannibal/Face and . . . Decker/Face?! Uh, yeah, you kind of have to read it to believe it.

LOSING FACE (50 pages) From Halo Press

A-Team/Battlestar Gallactica 'zine, focused mainly on Face & Starbuck.

- "The Computer Age Strikes Back" by Sarah Tindall (2 pages).
- "The Lengthening Chain" by Susan Taylor (27 pages). Face has just spent close to a year in prison, and isn't sure he wants to hook up with the Team again. But Decker's close on his tail . . .
- "Picky Picky Picky" by Susan Taylor (3 page review). One not-very-enthusiastic response to the episode "Only Church in Town."
- "Fair's Fair" by Sarah Tindall (2 pages).
- "Interim" (16 pages, Galactica).

! MASTERS OF THE JAZZ (91 pages) Printed August '88, Freemantle Press

Available from Donna Foster. Four interconnected stories from Lynda Craney. Face-focused story.

- "Shadows from the Past" (25 pages).
- "Trouble in Store" (4 pages).
- "Trouble and Strife" (6 pages).

- "Old Enemies, New Friends" (55 pages).

MORE THAN JUST A TEAM (58 pages) Printed June '87, Starlight Press

One long story by Morgan, in which Face has a recurrence of malaria and the Team must deal with numerous problems in getting him treated and then bringing him back to health.

!* NIGHTMARE (135 pages) Printed May '90

Available from Rita Ractliffe. Adult story, non-slash (although it does involve male rape.) Intense, graphic, disturbing, but very well written story of Hannibal's capture and rescue from a prison camp in Vietnam, set during the 5th season of TAT.

!/ ONE WAY OR ANOTHER 1 (72 pages) From PP Press

Reprint available from New Leaf Press. All A-Team issue (all Hannibal/Face) Three stories based on the episode "Deadly Maneuvers."

- "Deathdance" by Flipper (6 pages).
- "Sting in the Tail" by Flipper (22 pages).
- "Vengeance" by T. Roubles (36 pages).

!/ ONE WAY OR ANOTHER 2 (72 pages) From PP Press

Reprint available from New Leaf Press. Multi-media but largely A-Team (Hannibal/Face).

- "Orphans of the Storm" (5 pages).
- "Life in the Fast Lane" (6 pages).
- "Choices" (poem).
- "Facets" (poem).
- "Arabian Nightmare" by T. Roubles (46 pages).

!/ ONE WAY OR ANOTHER 3 (78 pages) May '88, PP Press

Reprint available from New Leaf Press. Mostly A-Team, some Miami Vice.

- "Two of a Kind" by H. E. (7 pages). Hannibal/Face.
- "Thereby Hangs a Tail" by T. Roubles (36 pages). Hannibal/Face.
- "Late Night" by H. E. (3 pages). Face/Murdock.
- "Edge of Night" by Gatorella (3 pages). Hannibal/Face.
- "The Love of Men" by Morgan (16 pages). Hannibal/Face.

!/ ONE WAY OR ANOTHER 4 (83 pages) Printed May '89, PP Press

Reprint available from New Leaf Press. Multi-media but mostly A-Team. A-Team stories:

- "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory" by Marie Morgan (3 pages). Hannibal/Face.
- "Living on Dreams" by H.E. (4 pages). Murdock/Face.
- "Business vs. Pleasure" by H.E. (2 pages). Hannibal/Face.
- "Sleeping Partners" by H.E. (2 pages). Hannibal/Face.
- "Cat-a-Clysms" by C.J.W. (8 pages). Hannibal/Face.
- "Comrades in Arms" by T. Roubles (11 pages). Murdock/Face first time.
- "Under the Spell" by H.E. (7 pages). Hannibal/Face, after "The Only Church in Town" episode.
- "The Wings of the Morning" by Morgan (18 pages). Hannibal/Face. The Colonel is believed dead and Face is depressed.

!/ ONE WAY OR ANOTHER 5 (82 pages) Printed May '90, PP Press

Reprint available from New Leaf Press. Multi-media but mostly A-Team. A-Team stories:

- "Birthday Surprises" by Flipper (21 pages). Hannibal/Face first time.
- "One Night In Saigon" by Marie Morgan (8 pages). Murdock/Face first time.
- "Three Men in a Tub" by H.M. (22 pages). Hannibal/Face/Murdock. Uh . . . just like the title says, basically.

!/ ONE WAY OR ANOTHER 6 (147 pages) From PP Press

Reprint available from New Leaf Press. Multi-media, but a lot of A-Team.

- "The Longest Time" by Marie Morgan (11 pages).
- "Matchmaker" by Flipper (3 pages).
- "Games . . . !" by T. Roubles (5 pages).

- "Bird in a Gilded Cage" by Flipper (40 pages). A-Team/Airwolf crossover.
- "'Twas the Night Before Christmas" by T. Roubles (7 pages). A-Team/Sherlock Holmes.

:) ON THE JAZZ

Edited by Deborah Okoniewski

This was a newsletter containing information about fans interested in the A-Team, A-Team articles and short, short stories. Issues I have story information on:

- **On The Jazz #7**
"Record Revised" by Lorraine Beatty pp. 11-16. (Endnote says it was originally printed in the 'zine SCENARIO edited by Scott Clark).
- **On The Jazz #8**
"Questions and Answers" by Lorraine Beatty, pp. 12-17.
"Guilty" by Jackie Edwards, pp. 18-22.
"Reflections" by Teresa Ward, p. 23.
- **On The Jazz #9**
A couple of filks in this.
"If Not For Christmas" by Michele Lellouche, pp. 11-14.
"Remembering" by Laura Michaels, p. 15.
"The A-Team Owns . . . Castle Greyskull??" by Tracy Revels, pp. 15 - 17. Yes, it's a He-Man/A-Team cross.
"Prom Night" by Jackie Edwards, pp. 18-27. This is the quote at the beginning of the story: "Suspend your sense of time for a moment . . . Our heroes are much as they are today, except for a presidential pardon. Hannibal is married and his daughter is 16. Imagine, if you will, what it would be like to be raised by the A-Team . . ."

ON THE JAZZ

Edited by N. N. Pellegrini

The electronic A-Team newsletter, created in October '94 and still in operation. Published approximately bi-weekly, with information, electronic LOC's, and some fiction (generally reprints). Available for downloading on the internet at The A-Team On the Web (<http://www.xs4all.nl/~jmm/a-team/>) and The A-Team Hawaii Page (<http://www.poi.net/~dcover>). Also available in hard-copy format from the editor. Reprinted fiction which has appeared to date (detailed information on these titles found elsewhere in this index):

- **Issue 5 Volume 2** (November 27, 1995): "Remembering" by Laura Michaels.
- **Issue 6 Volume 2** (December 10, 1995): "The Visitors vs. The A-Team" Part 1 by Laura Michaels.
- **Issue 7 Volume 2** (January 1, 1996): "The Visitors vs. The A-Team" Part 2 by Laura Michaels.
- **Issue 9 Volume 2** (January 14, 1996): "The A-Team Owns . . . Castle Greyskull??" by Tracy Revels.
- **Issue 10 Volume 2** (February 12, 1996): "Shadows in the Rain" Part 1 by Michele Lellouche.
- **Issue 11 Volume 2** (February 27, 1996): "Shadows in the Rain" Part 2 by Michele Lellouche.
- **Issue 12 Volume 2** (March 11, 1996): "Shadows in the Rain" Part 3 by Michele Lellouche.
- **Issue 13 Volume 2** (March 24, 1996): "Smuggler's Blues" Part 1 by Laura Michaels.
- **Issue 14 Volume 2** (April 9, 1996): "Smuggler's Blues" Part 2 by Laura Michaels.
- **Issue 15 Volume 2** (April 22, 1996): "An American Werewolf in America" by Jenna Russell.
- **Issue 16 Volume 2** (May 6, 1996): "If Not For Christmas" by Michele Lellouche.
- **Issue 17 Volume 2** (May 21, 1996): "Script" by Laura Michaels.
- **Issue 21 Volume 2** (July 16, 1996): "Somethin' Lost" by Rita Ractliffe.
- **Issue 22 Volume 2** (July 29, 1996): "Medallions" by Rita Ractliffe.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS #1

(75 pages)

From Jackie Edwards

From the CLOSED FOR REMODELING crew, an R-rated straight 'zine.

- "Gift Certificate" by Lori Beatty (19 pages). Murdock and Jody Joy on their Hawaiian vacation trip after the "Wheel of Fortune" episode.
- "Snowbound!" by Jackie Edwards (22 pages). Hannibal & Maggie, Murdock & some girl, Face, and B.A. go off on a ski trip. It's amazing how the avalanche manages only to cave in the roof over Hannibal's room and it seems like business as usual in the ski lodge afterwards . . .
- * "Nobody Does it Better" by Lori Beatty (13 pages). Set during "The Spy Who Mugged Me," Murdock

and Dominique battle it out in a bit of sexual . . . espionage.

- "Oak Alley" by Jackie Edwards (15 pages). Hannibal and Maggie on a vacation at a Southern plantation.
- "Aftermath" by Jackie Edwards (3 pages). Same story which appeared in CLOSED FOR REMODELING #4 (see above.)

! PLANS SCAMS AND VANS #1 (79 pages) Printed June '95, Sockii Press

- "Bad Day for a Space-Time Anomaly" by N.N. Pellegrini (29 pages). A Star Trek:TNG crossover.
- "Invasion of Air-Space" by Laura Michaels (11 pages). Is Face's new "companion" a visitor from outer space?
- "Rockin' Down the House" by Laura Michaels (8 pages). The Team put on a concert to save a community center.
- "101 Ways to Break Out of the V.A. Hospital by H.M. Murdock (5 pages).
- "Special Assignment" by N.N. Pellegrini (15 pages). An Amy & Murdock story.

'Zine also contains a review of a book on Stephen Cannell and an A- Team bibliography, both by Michele Lellouche.

! PLANS SCAMS AND VANS #2 (126 pages) Printed March '96, Sockii Press

- "The A-Team by Ernest Hemingway" by Kyle Cassidy (3 pages).
- "Out of the Frying Pan . . ." by Irene Snyder Schwarting (13 pages). Alternative universe MASH crossover; story of the Team's escape from Viet Nam prison camp.
- "A Team to Steele" by Liz Meinert (1/2 page). Short Remington Steele/A-Team crossover.
- "Missing?" by Laura Michaels (6 pages). Face investigates a missing dog.
- "Conspiracy" by Liz Meinert (1/2 page). Short Nowhere Man/A-Team crossover.
- "Hacking Away at the System" by N.N. Pellegrini (36 pages). The Team investigates missing students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- "The Lady" by Liz Meinert (11 pages). Airwolf/A-Team crossover.
- "Distant Thunder" by N.N. Pellegrini (1 page). Short X-Files/A-Team crossover.
- "A Closet Full of Skeletons, A Past Full of Ghosts" by Christopher Bunting (15 pages, script format). 5th season story, Frankie is kidnapped by an old enemy of Hannibal's.
- "Shadows and Stars" by N.N. Pellegrini (25 pages). Battlestar Galactica/Babylon 5/A-Team crossover.
- "The A-Team of Space" transcribed by Laura Michaels (8 pages). Buck Rodgers/Star Wars/Battlestar Galactica/"A-Team" crossover, from the logs of U.S.S. B.A.'s Van . . .

***! PRIVATE DEBRIEFING** (82 pages) Printed August '89, TAT Appreciation Society

Available from Donna Foster. Adult (straight) A-Team with a humorous edge - age statement required.

- "A Brief Story" by Chani Lee & Sheridan Allen (3 pages).
- "Sink or Swim" by Bogey (3 pages).
- "If You Have a Problem" by Chani Lee (7 pages). Too funny to believe.
- "The Eye of the Hurricane" by Sheona Welsh (13 pages). Murdock/Kelly.
- "In the Pink" by Porn (8 pages). Parody script with an all female Team.
- "Dangling Maneuvers" by Bogey (4 pages). You will never watch "Deadly Maneuvers" the same again.
- "It Shouldn't Happen to a 'Vette" by H. Drummock (7 pages). Face stuck in a rather difficult situation.
- "Wishful Thinking" by Bogey (5 pages).
- "A Whale of a Tail" by Brain H. Longstaff (3 pages).
- "Hard Times" by A. Wildnight (24 pages). Hannibal has an interesting adventure with a mysterious lady.

!/ PURE PORN SPECIAL (aka OUTRAGE) (81 pages) Printed March '91, PP Press

Reprint available from New Leaf Press.

- "Outrage" by T. Roubles (49 pages). Hannibal/Face.
- "Short Rations" by Flipper (10 pages). Hannibal/Face.
- "After the Showdown" by T. Roubles (19 pages). Murdock/Face.

!/ RIPPLES OF JAMESTOWN (75 pages) From PP Press

Reprint available from New Leaf Press.

- "Ripples of Jamestown" by T. Roubles (52 pages). Hannibal/Face.

- "Bite of the Apple" by T. Roubles (23 pages). What happens when Murdock arrives unexpectedly on Face's doorstep . . .

SAVING FACE (44 pages, digest size) From Halo Press

A-Team/Battlestar Gallactica 'zine, focused mainly on Face & Starbuck.

- "All Passion Spent" by Susan Taylor (13 pages). Does Face need - or even want - Hannibal's attentions while trying to recover from an injury that leaves him, well . . . incapacitated, shall we say? Sort of interesting "anti-slash" story.
- "No Time Like The Present" by Susan Taylor (11 pages). B.A. is dead. Face may never walk again. Hannibal may need some divine intervention to get his life and the Team back on track. (A real downer, actually.)
- "The Switch" by Sarah Tindall (20 pages). What happens after the "Mind Games" episode when they take Face to the V.A. instead of Murdock . . .

SCAM - THE UNOFFICIAL A-TEAM FAN CLUB NEWSLETTER From SCAM

A newsletter containing letters of comment, detailed episode summaries and reviews, and obviously news. Published for 30 issues in total (last issue in Summer of 1991).

:) SCAM PRESENTS #1: ONE MORE TIME (?) From SCAM

SCAM PRESENTS #2: DOUBLE HEAT (63 pages) From SCAM

- "Correct Minutes" by Socki (3 pages).
- "Vets Stick Together" by Karen Jessop (4 pages).
- "If Only I'd Known" by C. S. Armitage (2 pages).
- "A Case of Mistaken Identity" by Rue McAnally (1 page).
- "High School Drug Dealers " by Ruth Queensborough (2 pages).
- * "White Lines" by Thea Quinn (28 pages). A drug lord wants revenge on the Team so he kidnaps Face and gets him hooked on cocaine.

SCAM PRESENTS #3: TREBLE BREWING (59 pages) From SCAM

- "The Arrangement" by Judy Wrighton (4 pages).
- * "Any Wednesday" by Lori Beatty (8 pages) Amy & Murdock story.
- "Getting Home" by Klutz (3 pages).
- * "One Night in the DOOM Club" by Tracy Humphreys (2 pages).
- "Message for Maria" by Diane Buckley (2 pages).
- "Fatal Error" by J. G. Park (4 pages).
- "Missing in Action" by Socki & Captain Sensible (9 pages) 'Nam-era story.
- "Old Man River" by Judy Wrighton (2 pages).
- "Pecking Away at the System" by Felis Sylvestris (2 pages).
- * "Oriental Black Eyes Meet Occidental Brown" by Diane Buckley (3 pages).
- "The Labyrinth" by Thea Quinn (13 pages). Face is very seriously wounded during an attempted capture by Decker . . . but it wasn't Decker that shot at him.

SCAM PRESENTS #4: A SMALL AND DEADLY FOUR (63 pages) From SCAM

- "Vision of Hope" by Wendy Grice (4 pages).
- "Reflections" by Thea Quinn (2 pages).
- "In With a Chance" by Vivien Young (3 pages). Amy & Murdock story.
- "Adjust or Your Dead" by Felis Sylvestris (3 pages).
- "Busy Line" by Judy Wrighton (3 pages).
- * "Dreams of Yesterday" by Wendy Grice (21 pages). 5th season story, mainly focused on Face.
- "Forbidden Treasure" by Rae McAnally (2 pages).
- "Sapphires and Steele" by Thea Quinn (19 pages). A girl hires the Team to find her missing brother.
- "An Impossible Case" by Vivian Young (3 pages).

SCAM PRESENTS: ALIVE AT FIVE (16 pages) From SCAM

- * "The End of the Beginning" by Thea Quinn and Skye Zefferelion (10 pages). A bitter-sweet story of love and betrayal in the jungles of Viet Nam, and its lasting effect on the players.
- "The Great Fort Bragg Escape" (2 pages). The unit's theory on how it all REALLY began.

- * "Christmas Past, Christmas Present" (2 pages). A suitably schmaltzy tale bringing everyone together for a last toast.

***! SIDEWINDER**

(58 pages)

Printed August '86

Available from Donna Foster. Four interconnected stories by Owen Pentecost. Decker and the Team caught up in a plot involving the space shuttle. Good story with lots of background on Decker and Captain Crane and good action.

- "Extreme Political Pressure" (3 pages).
- "Incident at Da Nang" (6 pages).
- "Sidewinder" (45 pages).
- "Report to the General" (3 pages).

*** SLAP IN THE FACE**

(83 pages, digest size)

From Halo Press

One long story by Susan Taylor and Sarah Tindall. Also known as DANIELLE. Definitely the best of the Halo Press Face-zines, although it could have used some proofreading and grammar work. Face gets sidetracked while on the way to meeting the Team for a mission and ends up married(!) to Decker's troublesome scheming daughter(!) A fun read - but what's with that "grimy Philadelphia" crack?!

! TALES FROM TAT #1

(56 pages)

From TAT Appreciation Society

Available from Donna Foster.

- "The Original A-Team Pilot" by M. C. Coy (2 pages).
- "The Reflection" by Diane Spencer (poem).
- "I Left My Heart In" by Jane Watkins (6 pages).
- "Friends" by Socki (2 pages).
- "Templeton Peck" by Dee Dee (poem).
- "Snakebite" by Terry Evans (9 pages).
- "Silent Night" by The Lieutenant (1 page).
- "The Real Me" by Sue Bowley (poem).
- "Somebody Inside of Me" by Diane Spenser (16 pages).
- "A Problem Filled Day for The A-Team" by M. C. Coy (5 pages).
- "Snakebite 2" by Lynne Norman (3 pages).
- "In Defense of The A-Team" by Sola Starshine (poem).
- "The Sun Rises Forever" by Sola Starshine (7 pages).
- "Lady of Mystery" by Elion Slayer (poem).

! TALES FROM TAT #2

(65 pages)

From TAT Appreciation Society

Available from Donna Foster.

- "Father Figure" by Jan Harley (4 pages).
- "A Piece of Cake?" by Lynda Craney (9 pages). Another mission which certainly wasn't.
- "Shipwreck" by Tracy Humphreys (1 page).
- "Brothers in Arms" by Diane Spencer (2 pages).
- "A Night for a Fright" by Adrian Townsend (5 pages).
- "Teacher's Pet" by Diane Buckley (4 pages).
- "Face Meets a Lady" by Lynda Craney (2 pages).
- * "American Werewolf in America" by Jenna Russell (3 pages).
- "Memories" by Sola Starshine (4 pages).
- * "Shipwreck" by Lynda Craney (27 pages). Murdock must find the guys who have been captured by the military and then shipwrecked in a storm.

! TALES FROM TAT #3

(63 pages)

From TAT Appreciation Society

Available from Donna Foster.

- * "Bite" by Jan Harley (14 pages). Great story about the Team stuck in a strange house with some very strange hosts.
- "Sorry Seems to be the Hardest Word" by Socki (2 pages).
- "An Ode to B.A." by Sharrone Housley (poem).
- "Early Days" by Bogey (2 pages).
- "Very Far Away" by Francis Bishop (2 pages).
- "Caught in the Rain: A Miniseries" by Debbie Johnson (3 pages).

- "The Reflections of Face" by Tina White (poem).
- "Last Chance" by Jan Harley (3 pages).
- "A Taxing Affair" by Sharon White (4 pages).
- "Christmas" by Lynda Craney (1 page).
- "Merry Christmas Mr. Murdock" by Diane Buckley (3 pages).
- "Hannibal, Hannibal" by Faye Knight (poem).
- "To Heal a Dream" by Theresa Evans (4 pages).
- "Young at Heart" by Debbie Johnson (1 page).
- "The Letter" by Lynda Craney (2 pages).
- "Adventures in Oz" by Rae McAnally (20 pages). The Team on a mission in Australia after Murdock and a nurse from the V.A. are kidnapped.
- "Howling" by Jan Harley (poem).

:)! THE A-TEAM APPRECIATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Newsletter published by TATAS Fanclub, some issues available still in limited quantities from Donna Foster. Newsletters contained LOC, information articles, short stories, and much more. Fiction in each title that I have found are listed below. Copies of all other issues are desired.

- **Newsletter 1**
"Ze Bathtub Drama" by Lynne Norman (2 pages).
- **Newsletter 3**
"Alone in the Night" by Diane Spencer (1 page).
"Great Expectations" by Theresa Evans (2 pages).
- **Newsletter 4**
"The Day the Underworld Fell" by Jane Gregory (3 pages).
"Hannibal's Diet" by Dynamite Dee (3 pages).
"Happy New Year" by Socki (1 page).
"I've an Idea" (1 page).
- **Newsletter 5**
"Johnny Smith - A Starlog Exclusive" by Jenny Lee Stone (2 pages).
"Justice" by Lynne Norman (1 1/2 pages).
"No Matter How Old" by Theresa Evans (1 page).
- **Newsletter 6**
"Doesn't Matter What the Risk Is" by Theresa Evans (4 pages).
"No Hero's Welcome" by Elion Slayer (1 page).
- **Newsletter 7**
"Bleak Outlook for the Team" by Dynamite Dee (1 page).
"Revenge is Sweet" by Dynamite Dee (2 pages).
"This is No Vacation Part 1" by Adrian Townsend (2 pages).
- **Newsletter 8**
"Strangers in the Night" by Diane Spencer (1 page).
"Teardrops in the Rain" by Sue Bowley (1 page).
"This is No Vacation Part 2" by Adrian Townsend (2 pages).
- **Newsletter 10**
"Double Decker" by Owen Pentecost (1 1/2 pages).
"Do You Remember?" by Socki (2 pages).
"Silly 'Games' of the 'Mind'" by Sue Bowley (1 page).
- **Newsletter 12**
"A Christmas Story" by Owen Pentecost (3 1/2 pages).
"Hannibal Gets a Letter" by Mitch Clarke (1/2 page).

"We Could Always Try Jumping" by Theresa Evans (1 1/2 pages).

- **Newsletter 13**

"Boots Bullets and No Bikinis Part 1" by Dot Fittes (3 pages).

"Journey's End" by Jan Harley (1 page).

"Kid" by Theresa Evans (3 pages).

"Retreat Part 1" by Adrian Townsend (1 1/2 pages).

- **Newsletter 14**

"The A-Team - Retreat - Part Two" by Adrian Townsend (2 pages).

"Boots, Bullets and No Bikinis Parts Two and Three" by Dot Fittes (5 pages).

"The Lonely Hearts Colonel" by Madelaine Jenner (2 pages).

"Mirror Images" by Sharon White (1/2 page).

"Mirror Mirror on the Wall" by Owen Pentecost (3 pages).

- **Newsletter 16**

"A Groaner" by Brain H. Longstaff (1 page).

"A Tale of Tanis" by Jill Ripley (9 1/2 pages).

- **Newsletter 17**

"By Any Other Name" by A. Riter (5 1/2 pages).

"Deprived!" (1 page).

"The Say UNCLE Affair - Epilogue II" by Diane Spencer (1 page).

"Trespassers!" by Helen Service (3 pages).

- **Newsletter 19**

"Goldilocks and the Three Bears" by S. Potts (1 page).

"In the Beginning" by S. Potts (1 page).

- **Newsletter 20**

"A is for Absolutely Anything" by Debbie Johnson (4 1/2 pages).

SECTION 2: INDIVIDUAL A-TEAM STORIES AND ARTICLES

! "And Snoopy Went Down"

by Felis Sylvestris (2 pages)

Originally from AIRWAVES 6, printed November '86 by AAA Press. Available in AIRWAVES MULTIMEDIA SPECIAL #2 from New Leaf Press (see also "Friends or Foes?"). Murdock dies. Just too depressing.

"Afterglow"

by Lori Beatty (6 pages)

From NEXUS 2, printed March '88 by AAA Press. Reflections from Murdock and Kelly after the episode "Bounty."

! "The A-Team"

by Michele Lellouche (4 pages)

From FOR THOSE WHO CAME IN LATE: A GUIDE TO FANDOM UNIVERSE VOLUME 1, available from New Leaf Press. An Introductory article about the show.

!* "The Bats in the Belfry Affair or One Bird in the Hand is Worth Three in the Looney Bin or The B-Team Affair"

by Eileen Roy (24 pages)

From THE PALADINS AFFAIR, available from New Leaf Press. An A-Team/M.U.N.C.L.E. crossover featuring Murdock. Quite good if very, very, very strange story about some bizarre experiments at the V.A.

! "The Beginning"

by Devereaux Dane (14 pages)

From HEROES, available from New Leaf Press. (Note: this is not a / story but the zine is.) A Viet Nam-era piece about the start of the team.

"Better the Jazz You Know"

by David Gordon (3 pages)

Source unknown. Sometimes B.A.'s post-flight state can be put to good use . . .

!* "The Big Bad Wolfe"

by Joyce Ashcroft (31 pages)

From OSIRIS FILES 4, available from New Leaf Press. Very well written, humorous story, in the true fashion of the show's original episodes. The Team help a woman save the foster home she runs from demolition by the army.

!* "Big Brother"

by Theresa Evans (9 pages)

From SUFFERING HEROES (see also "To Heal a Dream"), available from New Leaf Press. 'Nam-era story, Face is hurt, comfort provided by Hannibal and Murdock.

!* "Birth of a Hero"

by Sue D Nym (3 pages)

From FRAK 5, available from New Leaf Press. The beginning of "Captain Cab."

"Blind Date"

by Patricia Franklin (13 pages)

From AIRWAVES 1, printed December '84 (see also "The Enemy of my Enemy.") Face is blinded - perhaps permanently--in an accident.

"Cave In"

by Jackie Edwards (7 pages)

Unknown source. Hannibal and Murdock are trapped in a cave in.

! "Comrades"

by Theresa Evans (9 pages)

From HEROES' PLIGHT #1 available from New Leaf Press. Vietnam-era story. Face is wounded.

"Comrades"

by J. Hindman (5 pages)

Unknown source. Set after "The Say Uncle Affair," focused on Stockwell and Ivan though Murdock makes some appearances.

! "Conspiracy"

by Jackie Edwards (13 pages)

From SOUTHERN LIGHTS 2, originally printed 1986 by Ashton Press, available currently from New Leaf Press. An old enemy of Hannibal's sets a trap (involving Murdock) to try to capture the colonel.

"Cradle Snatcher"

by Yvonne Parkin (4 pages)

Unknown source. Face adopts a young orphan.

!* "Diamond Formation"

by Lorraine Beatty (4 pages)

From SOUTHERN LIGHTS 3, available from New Leaf Press. Murdock is having dreams about his days with the Thunderbirds.

! "The Double Cross"

From HEROES PLIGHT #3, available from New Leaf Press.

"Double Take"

by Susan Skeen (12 pages)

Unknown source. A Battlestar Gallactica crossover. Face is dead, but a visit from Starbuck may bring Hannibal out of his depression.

! "Dreaming of Family"

by Laura Michaels (4 pages)

From REFRACTIONS 3, available from the Thirteenth Tribe. A Battlestar Galactica/A-Team crossover.

!* "The Enemy of my Enemy"

by Denise Sheets (30 pages)

Originally from AIRWAVES 1, printed December '84 (see also "Blind Date"). Available in AIRWAVES MULTI-MEDIA SPECIAL #1 from New Leaf Press (see also "A Team Effort" and "The Van"). The Team and Decker work together to rescue Decker's daughter. Good story, well written and lots of action.

"First Combat"

by Janet Ellicot (1/2 page)

From FRAK 6 (see also "Silver Memories and Sweet Memories"). MASH/A-Team crossover.

"Flashback"

by Kathleen Hoffman (7 pages)

Source unknown. Face has a flashback to 'Nam.

!* "Forget Me Not, Sucker"

by Joyce Ashcroft (36 pages)

From OSIRIS FILES 3, available from New Leaf Press. Decker attempts to get the truth out of Murdock with drugs but Murdock ends up losing his memory instead, which gets to be a problem when the Team needs him. Sharp and well-written.

! "Friendly Fire"

From GREEN EGGS AND HAM #1, available from New Leaf Press. Quantum Leap/A-Team crossover. Face gets shot (again!); subplot involving Al and Murdock.

! "Friends or Foes?"

by Patricia Franklin (23 pages)

Originally from AIRWAVES #3, available in AIRWAVES MULTIMEDIA SPECIAL #2 from New Leaf Press (see also "And Snoopy Went Down"). Crossover with Starsky & Hutch. S&H are ordered to find the A-Team.

"The Good of the One"

by Cathy L. Bryson (5 pages)

From THE CANNELL FILES #11 (see information in Section 3). "Missing scene" story from the "Without Reservations" episode.

"Hanna's Tale"

by Yarnweaver@aol.com

Found on the internet at <http://www.seas.upenn.edu/~pellegr/hanna.html>. The story of Hanna Smith, daughter of Hannibal.

!* "I Don't Like Mondays"

by Jan Harley (13 pages)

From THE AGONY COLUMN #1 available from New Leaf Press. Excellent if disturbing story about Murdock's experiences in the prison camp during the war, and what happened to him in the months after the bank job. (As a side note, this 'zine also contains two great ST:TNG stories centered around Reginald Barclay, so this is a great 'zine for Dwight Schultz fans.)

! "Incident in a Tumbleweed Town"

by Linda S. Maclaren (10 pages)

From MEDIA RARE, available from New Leaf Press. Tumbleweeds help the Team avoid the military.

"In 'Nam We Trust"

by Cathy L. Bryson (4 pages)

Unknown source. Face is flashing back to 'Nam again.

! "In Remembrance of Times Past"

by Janet Ellicot (4 pages)

From FRAK 9, available from New Leaf Press (see also "Them That Asks No Questions"). A missing scene from "Bad Time on the Border."

"Joyride"

by Morgan (4 pages)

From ENIGMA 13, printed '90 Blue Jay Press. (See also "Strange Beginning"). Murdock takes Face on a roller coaster ride.

"Leader"

by Jackie Edwards (10 pages)

From AIRWAVES 9, printed November '87 by AAA Press. Hannibal loses his sight - possibly permanently - in an accident.

*** "Legacy from the Jungles of Nam"**

by Lori Beatty (29 pages)

From OF DREAMS AND SCHEMES #6, published May '88. Murdock is suffering from a recurrence of malaria, and Hannibal and Amy are taking care of him until Face and B.A. arrive with medical help. Exceptionally well written, nice character development and background on Hannibal and Murdock's relationship.

"Lies and Consequences"

by Susan M. Garrett

From the KARENINA CONTINUITY CHRONICLES #2, edited by Susan M. Garrett. Part of a 5 part (plus some other miscellaneous) zine series relating the adventures of Karenina, a vampire that wants to become

human.

"Life-Line"

by Jackie Edwards (4 pages)

From AIRWAVES 10, printed March by '88 AAA Press. Hannibal's only chance for recovery may be a visit from Maggie Sullivan.

"Max & Murdock's Wedding"

Found on the Internet at <http://www.seas.upenn.edu/~pellegrini/wedding2.html>. Logs from America On-Line and the alternative universe A-Team stories created there.

"M-16 Wedding"

by Yarnweaver@aol.com

Found on the Internet at <http://www.seas.upenn.edu/~pellegrini/m16wedding.html>. Hanna Smith and Templeton's wedding day.

"Medallions"

by Rita Ractliffe (3 pages)

From EVERYTHING BUT THE KITCHEN SINK #5 printed '91, Markalaine Press (See also "Somethin' Lost"). Hannibal reminisces on how he received each of his metals in Korea and 'Nam.

! "Mistaken Identity"

by Patricia Franklin (17 pages)

Originally from AIRWAVES #3, available in AIRWAVES GALACTICA SPECIAL from New Leaf Press. Apollo and Starbuck meet the A-Team.

!/"Night Maneuvers"

by Fran Ward (4 pages)

From AMARE 4, available from New Leaf Press. A Face/Murdock first-time story. (Note: This zine is worth checking out for a really, truly bizarre adult Knight Rider story . . .)

:) "Not Your Standard Bug-Eyed Monster"

by John Peel (9 pages)

From TIME WINDS, EARTH ISSUE 12, edited by Susan M. Garrett. Doctor Who (the 3rd one?) and Murdock face an alien invasion at the V.A. with the help of the A-Team.

"One Beginning"

by Juli Cleveland (3 pages)

From either SCENARIO (1985) or RETURN OF SCENARIO (1987), edited by Scott Clark. Story of Face joining the Team.

"Party Girl"

by Rita Ractliffe (5 pages)

From ADULT SITUATIONS, unknown issue #. What happens when Valley Girl, yuppie Non-Comm. officer meets the A-Team!

!* "Pasadena Murdock and the Gem of the Sahara"

by Michele Lellouche and Laura Michaels (22 pages)

From DISTASIS (see also "Wanted: Missing Vans" and "When Shadows Fall"), available from Laura Michaels. NOTE! An unauthorized version of this story was published in CLOSED FOR REMODELING #4, giving credit only to Michele. The CFR version is different and not the official version. This is a very funny "Jewel of the Nile"-style parody story.

! "Past Remembered"

by Brenda Callagher (9 pages)

Originally from AIRWAVES 19, printed April '91 AAA Press, available in AIRWAVES GALACTICA SPECIAL from New Leaf Press. A crossover with Gallactica '80.

*** "Script"**

by Laura Michaels (& H.M. Murdock) (11 pages)

From STARNET #5, July-August, editor Michelle L. Levigne. More of a newsletter than a 'zine. Murdock decides to come up with a better science fiction script than "Bullets and Bikinis" and it involves the A-Team as the stars.

! "Should You Chose to Accept It"

by Janet Ellicot (1/2 page)

From FRAK 7 (see also "Twice as Much Trouble"), available from New Leaf Press. Short Mission: Impossible crossover.

"Silver Medals and Sweet Memories"

by Janet Ellicot (26 pages)

From FRAK 6 (see also "First Combat"). A story about the A-Team getting their pardon and what happened to Morrison.

"Smuggler's Misfortune" (aka "Smuggler's Blues") by Laura Michaels (11 pages)
From OUR FAVORITE THINGS #4, edited by Elaine M. and Anne Batterby. An A-Team/MacGyver crossover.

!/"Snowbound Paradise" by T. Roubles (8 pages)
From UNCHARTED WATERS #3 (November '90, Crevichon Press), available in reprint from New Leaf Press. A cabin in a winter resort is the ideal spot for a "honeymoon," and Hannibal and Face are determined to make good use of it.

!"Some Things Never Change" by Cynthia Merrik (14 pages)
Originally from AIRWAVES #27, available in AIRWAVES MULTIMEDIA SPECIAL #6 from New Leaf Press. Hannibal's daughter is kidnapped.

"Somethin' Lost" by Rita Ractliffe (4 pages)
From EVERYTHING BUT THE KITCHEN SINK 5, printed 1991 by Markalaine Press (see also "Medallions"). Hannibal remembers a not-so good Christmas in Korea.

"Star's End Bar Party 5/22/95"
Found on the Internet at <http://www.seas.upenn.edu/~pellegr/decker.html>. Logs from America On-Line and the alternative universe A-Team stories created there. Decker crashes a party and causes much confusion.

"Star's End Bar Party 12/10/95"
Found on the internet at <http://www.seas.upenn.edu/~pellegr/121095.html>. Logs from America On-Line and the alternative universe A-Team stories created there. Max and Murdock have an announcement to make.

*** "Strange Beginning"** by P. S. de Resistance (9 pages)
From ENIGMA 13, printed '90 Blue Jay Press (see also "Joyride"). Story of Murdock & Face getting to know each other during the war.

! "Survive the Alliance" by Sharon Monroe (87 pages)
An unauthorized version of this story appeared in OSIRIS FILES 1 and 2, but the official version is available in a stand-alone 'zine from Sharon Monroe. The scoop, from Laura Michaels: "Sharon Monroe pulled her story from [OSIRIS]. The Osiris Files continued to publish *their own version* and claimed the story was theirs. Sharon went on to publish the *entire* story in SURVIVE THE ALLIANCE (her 'zine). Osiris Files did not have the entire story so could not publish an identical piece. They started with Sharon's work and supposedly diverged from there. This is a multiple crossover-story involving V. Battlestar Galactica, Knight Rider, Airwolf, Remington Steele, and of course the A-Team."

!"Tactics in Toyland" by Sean Christie (25 pages)
Originally from AIRWAVES #28, available now in AIRWAVES MULTI-MEDIA SPECIAL #7 from New Leaf Press. A toy company, squabbling "siblings," an eccentric house, a vampire and the A-Team.

!"A Team Effort" by Brenda Callagher (29 pages)
Originally from AIRWAVES 2, printed June '85 by AAA Press, available in AIRWAVES MULTI-MEDIA SPECIAL #1 from New Leaf Press (see also "Enemy of my Enemy" and "The Van"). A Knight Rider/A-Team crossover story. Is Michael Knight working for Decker or with the Team as they go up against a group of mercenaries?

!"Them That Asks No Questions" by Janet Ellicot (4 pages)
From FRAK 9, available from New Leaf Press (see also "In Remembrance of Times Past"). 5th season, odd little piece.

!* "To Heal a Dream" by Theresa Evans (5 pages)

From SUFFERING HEROES (see also "Big Brother"), available from New Leaf Press. Also available in HEROES' PLIGHT 2 from New Leaf Press. Murdock tries to comfort a nightmare-haunted Face.

!"Twice as Much Trouble"

by Janet Ellicot (25 pages)

From FRAK 7 (see also "Should You Choose to Accept It"), available from New Leaf Press. Hannibal and the Team must help the children (fathered by Hannibal) that their mother gave up for adoption in 1969.

"United We Stand"

by Teresa Ward (5 pages)

Unknown source. Short action piece - is Face leaving the Team and turning against them?

! "The Van"

by Jackie Edwards (14 pages)

Originally from AIRWAVES #3, available in AIRWAVES MULTI-MEDIA SPECIAL #1 (See also "Enemy of my Enemy" and "A Team Effort") from New Leaf Press. An A-Team/Master crossover. Maggie gets amnesia after getting attacked while driving B.A.'s van, ends up being rescued by the Master. See the Team get their asses kicked by a Ninja!

*** "The Visitors vs the A-Team"**

by Laura Michaels

From GRIP #22 edited by Roberta Rogow. V/A-Team crossover. The A-Team decides to do something about the Visitors and ends up working with the LA resistance.

"The Wall"

by Susan M. Garrett (15 pages)

From RERUN #3, edited by Lorraine Bartlett. Really nice A-Team/Knight Rider/ Magnum P.I./ Airwolf story (or maybe I should say series of vignettes) about these veterans going to the memorial in Washington. The A-Team section is about 5 pages.

!* "Wanted: Missing Vans"

by Laura Michaels (36 pages, script format)

From DISTASIS (see also "Pasadena Murdock" and "When Shadows Fall"), available from Laura Michaels. An A-Team/Star Wars crossover story, very funny.

"War Hero"

by Jackie Edwards (20 pages)

From ADULT SITUATIONS, probably #1. Hannibal & Maggie story. What happens when a blinded Hannibal stays at Maggie's, and a group of bank robbers hole up in her house as well.

!* "When Shadows Fall"

by Susan Garrett (20 pages)

From DISTASIS (see also "Pasadena Murdock" and "Wanted: Missing Vans"), available from Laura Michaels. Does the A-Team believe in ghosts? Strange things happen in an abandoned house.

!* "The Web Page Wild Adventure"

by Laura Michaels

Interactive web-page adventure found at <http://members.aol.com/lauram3017/fiction/trip.html>. Bill and Ted explore several different time periods and media universes including the A-Team, Star Trek (with Barclay!), and Due South.

"With a Little Help from My Friends"

Unknown author (19 pages)

Source unknown. An A-Team/Airwolf crossover story.

PART 3: OTHER ZINES

BARACUS NEWS

A-Team fanzine/newsletter produced by THE A-TEAM FAN SOCIETY in Germany. Established in the late '80s, it ran until the Summer of '94. Currently there are efforts underway to revive both the club and the 'zine, under the supervision of Sonja Horstmann - former newsletters were in German; future ones may be in English depending on international response.

:) THE CANNELL FILES

Fanzine published by Scott Clark: December 1984 - #1 to Summer 1989 - #19/20. From Scott Clark: "THE

CANNELL FILES was essentially a letter-and-information 'zine, and preceded the printed *ON THE JAZZ* fanzine by several months. It was a place for fans of ANY Stephen J. Cannell show to gather and discuss . . . as well as a clearinghouse for news about behind-the-scenes and the actors careers. Issues #1-around #14 contained frequent letters-of-comment from viewers regarding A-TEAM. Issues which contained specific A-TEAM related material OTHER than LoCs are listed next:"

Issue #2 (Feb. 84): Complete season 1 episode guide.

Issue #4 (June 84): Complete season 2 episode guide.

Issue #5: Complete season 3 episode guide.

Issue #6: Partial season 4 episode guide.

Issue #7: Partial season 4 episode guide.

Issue #8: Finish of season 4 episode guide.

Issue #10: All of season 5 episode guide but last episode.

Issue #11: Final episode description, and the short 5-page original fan story "The Good of the One" by Cathy Bryson.

Issue #13: Special "Focus On . . ." feature looking at Lance LeGault.

NOTE: There were flyers at Media West Con in '96 about efforts to revive this 'zine. So far I have no yet received any issues (my records show my subscription check remains uncashed) so I do not know if this ever happened.

! CROSSTREAMS #1

Available from New Leaf Press.

!/ SCOTCH DOUBLES #2

Available from New Leaf Press. Includes Professionals, Champions, and at least one A-Team or A-Team crossover.

?:) ZINE AID #1

From Susan J. King. A 'zine to benefit the Band Aid Trust, was supposed to have contained some A-Team fiction.

SECTION 4: PRESS INFORMATION

Note: names for which I know the addresses are up-to-date and accurate are underlined. The other addresses I have not sent direct inquiries to so I don't know if they are still good. Some are almost ten years old. However, if you're trying to locate 'zines, it's worth a shot to try an address. Even if a 'zine is many years out of print, the editor may still have one or two stray copies sitting around to get rid of. You never know . . .

AAA PRESS: 5 Sandfield Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8AW.

ELAINE BATTERBY: P.O. Box 199, Macedon NY 14502.

BLUE JAY PRESS: Pamela Dale, Hilcrest, St. Mary's Rd., Riddlesden, Keighley, Yorkshire, BD20 5PA England.

SCOTT CLARK: Orion Majoris Publications, 5100 Emerald Dr. #16, Lincoln, NE 68516.

JACKIE EDWARDS: 8717 S. La Cienega Blvd, #20, Inglewood, CA 90301.

DONNA FOSTER: Tanis, 30 Longwick, Langdon Hills, Essex, SS16 5UG England.

HALO PRESS: c/o Susan Taylor, 141 Kingswell Road, Ensbury Park, Bournemouth, Dorset, England BH10 5DQ.

J. HOFFMANN: Maximilian-Kolbe-Str. 37, 4000 Dusseldorf, West Germany.

SONJA HORSTMANN: Neustadt-Str. 1, PF 2129, 32355 Pr. Oldendorf, Germany. Also can contact via email to amyallen@HRZ.Uni-Bielefeld.DE.

SUSAN J. KING: 47 Sheridan Road, Belvedere, Kent. DA17 5AR.

LAURA MICHAELS: P.O. Box 6514, Delray Beach, FL 33482. (Laura's DISTASIS zine also contains a great A-Team episode guide and a bibliography of A-Team references.)

SHARON MONROE: 3369 Rolling Hills Drive, Eagan, MN 55121.

DEBORAH OKONIEWSKI: 11833 Gilmore Street #1, North Hollywood, CA 91606.

RITA RACTLIFFE: 15500 Erwin Street, #297, Van Nuys, CA 91411.

ROBERTA ROGOW: Other World Books, PO Box 1124, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410.

SCAM: 171 Heath Road, Hounslow, Middlesex, England.

SOCKII PRESS/NICOLE PELLEGRINI: 2429 Locust St., #315, Philadelphia PA 19103.

THE THIRTEENTH TRIBE: c/o Victoria Haslam, 31 Middleton Road, Morden, Surrey, England SM4 6RU.

What else can you do to find out-of-print 'zines? Well, you can try science fiction and media conventions; sometimes dealers will have selections of used 'zines available, or you can ask if they have any of the specific titles you are looking for in their stock at home. Check personal ads in adzines for people selling used 'zines, or post your own personal ad stating what you're looking for (it really does work! I've found numerous titles this way). Also post your requests on your web page, or on mailing lists devoted to a specific fandom or fanzines in general. Some references to keep handy:

FANZINE: "Discussion of Fanzines, Small Press and Self Publishing" Email: FANZINE@psuvm.psu.edu.

FYI (For Your Information) Adzine: Wizard Works, c/o Jan Keeler, 22440 Dickinson Rd., New Boston, MI 48164-9455.

GAZ (Generic Ad Zine): GAZ, c/o Candace Pulleine, P.O. Box 980744, Houston TX 77098-0744.

The A-Team Electronic Mailing List: contact pelleagri@eniac.seas.upenn.edu for details.

GOOD LUCK, AND HAPPY HUNTING AND READING!



ALTERNATIVE THEME SONGS FOR "THE A-TEAM"

BY RHONDA EUDALY AND N. N. PELLEGRINI

THE A-TEAM MANIACS (To the Animaniacs theme)

Here comes the Aquamaniac, and he's crazy on the jazz,
So don't you dare relax or he'll take you out real fast,
He's the Aquamaniac!

Watch the wanted A-Team and their reporter friends,
To save their butts they run around and try to make amends,
The military doesn't like them, they sent Lynch around the bend,
They blow things up, Murdock's a nut, that's how Cannell's script
ends!

We're A-Team maniacs! We've got vid tapes by the stacks,
We know all the trivia facts, our friends all think we've cracked,
We're A-Team maniacs!

There's Faceman, Mr. Peck, trying to con a pretty nurse,
Murdock's chasing Billy and he's always getting worse.
B.A. chases bad guys and can really make them hurt.
Now Decker's mad, and Tawnia's sad, 'cause Amy got there first!

We love the Aquamaniac, with his bad movie contracts,
He kept the Team intact 'till NBC gave them the ax,
We're A-Team manie-
Stockwell's a painey-
Get rid of Frankie-
A-Team maniacs!

We're on the jazz!

(NOT QUITE) FRIENDS (to the FRIENDS Theme)

No one told you Billy was gonna run away
The job's a burst, you're nuts, you live in the V.A.
The big guy's van is broke and stuck in second gear
The colonel's jazzed, you're spazzed, Face ran, it's B.A. who you
fear

'Cause
He said, "Shut up, foo'!"
(He can't take it anymore)
He said, "Shut up, foo'!"
(Or he'll throw you out the door)
He said, "Shut up, foo'!"
(The Mudsucker's word's the rule)

The Team of Bel Air (To the Fresh Prince of Bel Air theme)

In West Los Angeles, hidden and secure
In a laundry is where they get most of their clues
Shootin' and bombin' and helpin' folks out
When Decker starts comin', they let out a shout
When a couple of goons who're up to no good
Start makin' trouble in a neighborhood
The colonel has a plan for makin' things right
And says "It'll be a piece of cake but we're going to need Murdock
from the V.A."
B.A. brings the van, and when it comes near
Face gives them cover, and Murdock does a cheer
Hannibal joins the rest as they get away
As they leave all the bad guys and Decker behind
The colonel says, "I love it when the plan comes together!"
So when you're in trouble and the A Team you find
No matter the problem they'll make it better.

A-TEAM ISLAND (to the Gilligan's Island theme)

Just sit right back and you'll hear a tale, a tale of a fateful trip,
That started from a Hanoi port aboard an Army ship.

The sergeant was a burly man, the colonel brave and sure.
Four Army men that sailed that day from their Viet Nam tour.

Their Viet Nam tour.

The Army started getting tough, the A-Team's freedom lost.
If not for the jazz and their level heads, Decker would never have
lost.

Decker would never have lost.

The Team set down in the midst of the L.A. underground.
With Hannibal, the Faceman, too.
B.A. Baracus, and his van.
The Crazyman, the sidekicks and invisible friends . . .

Here on the A-Team Isle!

THE A-TEAM BUNCH (to the Brady Bunch theme)

This is the story of a handsome colonel
Who was bringing three commandos out of 'Nam.
All of them were on the jazz, just like their leader,
The meanest one in a van.

This is the story of a man named Decker,
Who was busy with an assignment of his own.
He wants to nab the Team all together,
But he's left all alone.

Until one day when the colonels met each other,
And they knew it was much more than a clue.
That that this group would somehow come together,
And Decker would always be the fool.

The A-Team Bunch. The A-Team Bunch.
That's the way they became the A-Team Bunch.

BEVERLY COMMANDOS (to the BEVERLY HILLBILLIES theme)

Come and listen to my story 'bout a man named John,
Crafty army colonel gonna get 'em outta 'Nam.
Then one day he was shootin' at the 'Cong,
When out of the sky came a yodelin' song.

Murdock that is, Captain Cab, Crazyman.

The next thing you know Hannibal's outta there.
Faceman yell, "Let's get away from here."
Said, "Californy is the place we oughta be."
So they loaded up their guns and moved to Beverly.

Hills that is, crime lords, slime balls.

Now it's time to say good-bye to John and all his men.
They'd like to thank Colonel Decker for kindly comin' in.
They're all coming' back next week to show us their class,
And have a heapin' helpin' of the thing we call the jazz.

The plan's come together, now, ya hear.

THE A-TEAM VENTURES

(To the tune of Tiny Toon Adventures)

They're meany, they're scammy, and just a little hammy,
And in this assignment, they're invading your TV!
They're justice dispensers, they've cracked up lots of fences,
On all the Teams adventures get your dose of victory!

So here's B.A.'s van, it a rolling arsenal,
It goes real fast, it blows right past Decker first of all.
No plans were rejected, expect the unexpected,
Hannibal's on the jazz and it's about to start!

They're handsome, they're dashing, Face has looks for scamming,
Hannibal is planning, and B.A. causes pain!
Here's Billy, and Socky, and brave and furry Bogey,
Hannibal's got stogies, and Murdock is insane!

At A-Team University, Decker earns his Team degree.
The teaching staff's been getting laughs since 1983.
They're savvy, they're jazzy, they're all a little snazzy,
It's The A-Team adventures, running from the past!

. . . And now we're on the jazz!



Intertwining Fates

by Natasha McKee

Prologue

Bang! The crew of the *Masalka* heard as they felt the already-damaged ship take another hit from the Squattors' attack. Warning alarms and signals went off all over the ship.

"We can't take another hit like that!" Lieutenant Xavren Cado said as he rubbed the brightly-colored spots on his forehead for luck.

"Another hit like that and we may not be here much longer," Lieutenant Alexander Shales, an exotic-looking (by human standards) human male exclaimed. With his creamy-white skin, chocolate-colored hair and dark brown eyes, he could almost pass for a Katanean.

"That was certainly optimistic," Lorgan said sarcastically.

"Yeah, well, I for one have no intention of surrendering!" stated Kamala, first officer and only person aboard to have actually lived under the oppressive Organization.

"How much power do we have left, Lieutenant?" Captain William Girard asked the half-human, half-Morrovia man known as Xavren Cado.

"We're down to our last reserves," came the response.

Girard reached over and touched the comm panel at his right. "Girard to Maelek," he called to the Mycelian engineer. "Girard to engineering!"

"Sir," Cado's wife, a Moonaren with holoprojectal talents, started. "There seems to be a power breach nearing a hull breach in the engineering section!"

"Girard to Rena," the older human male called. "Doctor, I want you to get a team down to engineering!"

"I would, but -" the Benaran woman began, "we have heavy casualties down here!"

"Well then, go yourself. We have a hull breach nearing that section," the gray-haired captain explained.

"The lifts have been shut down!" the young medic screamed, as the bridge crew heard shouts and explosions on the other end of the link.

"Listen, Doctor -" the captain was about to finish when he heard his half-Katanean, half-shapeshifter (beings who are referred to, in the

Katanean language, as Kormanas) first officer interrupt.

"I'll go to the med-lab and try getting Rena down there," Kamala piped in.

"But I thought -" Shales began.

"Look, Shales, we need power and we need it now! Without Rena we can't resuscitate Maelek and we'll never get out of here!" the raven-haired woman explained.

With that, she focused on the location of the med-lab and teleported herself there. Teleportation was a rare talent in that it was only found in the Katanie race. Because there were only a total of six Kataneans left, it made the trait even more unique.

As she arrived, she saw a woman a few inches shorter than her own five-feet, seven inches. The woman had upswept blond hair and blue eyes. On her forehead lay subtle ridges. It was the young Benaran, Dr. Rena Lai, called Rena because of the cultural belief in assigning family names first, given names last.

"Look, Rena," Kamala started, "I really don't have time for formalities. We need to get moving now."

The other woman complied and, with the thought of the engineering section, the two women began teleporting.

The first thing Rena saw was the wounded - but not dead - body of Maelek of the town of Martok, Mycelia. Kamala was nowhere in sight. She knelt down beside the telekinetic engineer and placed a scanning device on his multi-colored, ridged head before she went up to the comm panel.

"Kamala," she said as she nervously glanced over at her patient. She heard no response and began to worry. She looked back at her patient. Well, at least Mycelians have tougher immune systems than humans - meaning Maelek would survive. She felt the ship rock once more. Now, if only she knew what had happened to Kamala.

Chapter 1

Kamala looked at the strange sights surrounding her. *What happened? Where was she?*

She moaned ever so slightly as she felt her head throbbing in pain. She knew she could al-

ways make it stop by just thinking about it - another Katanie trait - but decided to get her bearings first. The last thing she remembered was that she had been on board the Earth Alliance's heavily-modified Mycelian ship, the *Masalka*, and was about to teleport her best friend Rena and herself to the ship's engineering section when Rena . . . *Where was Rena?*

She thought about the possibility that her Benaran friend was here with her, but dismissed the idea because she knew it was physically impossible. *Well, she thought, now I know what I read about teleportation limitations is true.* She knew that unlike her mother, Kendra, who was a full-blooded Katanean, she was limited to teleporting herself only. Her mother, on the other hand, could teleport up to four people at a time. Otherwise, the Katanean who teleported more than her maximum would wind up in what the Kataneans referred to as "Kata Kora," or no woman's land.

She sighed and glanced at her surroundings once again. It certainly looked like Earth, all right - not Kata Kora. She obviously knew what the humans' homeworld looked like from the time she spent there, first the Alliance Military, then as a member of the Security League, and now as a member of Intelligence. She was working as a field operative - a job that she was now seriously considering quitting because of her current assignment as an expert on the Organization. Now, the only questions remaining were where on Earth she was and during what time period, for it clearly wasn't the twenty-third century Earth she knew.

She saw that she was in an ally, in-between two almost rundown, brick buildings. She heard a child's ear-piercing scream. Remembering her heritage, she concentrated on looking "more human." In the process of metamorphosizing, the small lines of color on her cheeks, forehead, chin, and both sides of hands, as well as on her stomach, disappeared, leaving her skin completely the same creamy-white it was everywhere else on her body.

Just as she grabbed her heirloom, a Katanean-steel dagger, she saw four men rush out of a nearby building - a restaurant, it looked like - and they began fist-fighting with a couple of men holding primitive weapons. She ran over and decided to give them a hand. Noticing that one of the men with what looked a gun was about to take a shot at one of the four men who were trying to save the child, she lunged towards the gunman and knocked him over.

"Thank you," the rescued man uttered. Kamala noticed that he wore a dark-blue baseball cap and a brown leather jacket.

She nodded in response and grabbed the child, a seven or eight year-old boy, by the arm and headed away from the car he was being dragged into. She then saw that the other bad man was now joining his partner and was promptly tied-up.

"Thanks for your help, Miss -," an older, white-haired man, lighting what looked like a cigar prodded. Cigar smoking was illegal in Kamala's time period.

"Kamala. Plain and simple Kamala," she replied.

"That's quite a knife there," he commented.

"Don't be fooled," she started. "I don't use this to kill anyone with." *Unless it's a Squattor.* She began thinking of the ugly, lizard-like killing machines used to spread the reign of terror caused by the Organization. She shuddered in revulsion. She put the intricate dagger into her silken satchel that lay hidden beneath her vest.

"My name's Hannibal. Hannibal Smith. That's Murdock," he said, referring to the man in the baseball cap and leather jacket. "B.A.," he nodded towards a large man with an odd haircut and more gold jewelry than she'd ever seen on one person before in her long lifetime. "And that's Face," he finished and nodded towards a dark-blond-almost-brown-haired man with blue eyes. Her instincts told her he was a lot like Shales - a scary thought unto itself.

"That leaves the question of who this little -" She paused, because she almost said "terran" - a word that, like "Earther," was considered offensive by humans and would probably reveal the fact that she was an "alien." Correcting herself, she finished, "- little friend of ours is."

"My name's Jason Rhines," the boy said.

"What were those men doing there chasing you?" the man named B.A. asked

Kamala's instincts told her that this boy was fearful of the men who were now tied up. "I think we should be going and leave our friends to the authorities," she suggested.

"Yeah, Decker could be here any minute now, Hannibal," Face said nervously.

"Who's Decker?" she inquired in curiosity.

"Someone you'll soon find out about," Hannibal responded as he and the other three men, plus the boy, climbed into the black van with a red-orange stripe and a section of dark gray.

"Now wait just a minute!" she exclaimed. "I'm coming with you, whether you like it or not!"

"Suit yourself, lady," Hannibal replied as he took another puff of his cigar. With that, she forced her way in.

As Templeton Peck - better known to his

friends as "Face" or "(the) Faceman" - watched the mysterious woman they'd just met, he couldn't help but feel attracted to her. After all, she was a beautiful woman, and *definitely* not a client.

He gazed at her long, braided black hair, creamy-white skin, and dark brown eyes. He noted the way that her eyes sparkled like onyx. He also noted her unusual attire. Kamala was wearing a long, slanted-black skirt with fringe on the bottom, as well as an ebony-colored blouse, similar to a tank-top. This was partially concealed by a floral, tapestry-like vest, similar in style to the ones worn by the A-Team's friend, Frankie "Dishpan man" Santana. On her feet were a pair of ankle-length black boots.

The strange parts of her outfit were the black satchel strap, going from her right shoulder to her left hip, and the small satchel, which contained who-knew-what besides the elaborate dagger-resting on her left hip. This was concealed, partially, by the vest. The other odd feature was the armband that she wore on her upper-left arm. It appeared to be made of some sort of rope that had been wrapped around twice, with a small, dented, silvery-metal arrowhead hanging from the lower coil. She was also slightly muscular, like a swimmer.

Face then noticed the five silver bangles she wore on each arm, forming a total of ten bracelets. Each one was different in its design, and all probably valuable. The gold locket she wore on a simple golden chain was also probably worth a great deal of money.

"Excuse me," he started. She glanced at him suspiciously.

"Yes," she finally replied, after a noticeable hesitation.

"Out of mild curiosity," he began, "what type of rope is that, exactly?"

"Mycelian vinerope, found only in the Nadja forest in Mycelia." She added, hesitantly, "it symbolizes luck and courage."

"I see," he answered as if he was puzzled. Kamala couldn't shake the feeling that the man called "Face" was interested in her, even though such a thought was somewhat conceded on her part. If this feeling was correct, then she was definitely going to have a long talk with him.

Well, she thought, at least I kept him off balance with my explanation. She smiled sheepishly at their recent discussion about her armband. She quickly glanced towards Murdock to avoid looking at Face, for she knew he was watching her.

"Hannibal," Face started, as he briefly averted his eyes from Kamala. "Where are we going?"

"To a safe spot," the white-haired man

answered, almost as if it was a private joke.

"So," Kamala began, still looking at Murdock, "who's Decker?"

"It's a long story," Face replied, eager to find out what she thought was so interesting about Murdock.

"I've got the time," she responded. Especially since Kataneans have very long life spans. She was somewhere in the neighborhood of three to four hundred years old. The fact was that, except for the first five years of their lives where they went from being infants to adults almost overnight, Kataneans and Shapeshifters never aged physically, so one couldn't tell their age by appearance. And asking Kataneans or Shapeshifters how old they were was considered very offensive.

"Which reminds me," Hannibal piped in. "Who are you, exactly?"

"I beg your pardon?" the raven-haired woman replied.

"I mean, why were you so eager to help Jason and come with us?" the colonel elaborated.

"Maybe because I've pretty much had a life-long dislike of bullies, and have never been one to let someone suffer because of someone else's greed," she retorted.

"All right," he responded. "Now, I don't want to sound offensive in any way, but have you ever worked with law enforcement or do you have any connection to it?"

"If your referring to twentieth-century authorities, then my answer is 'no'," she stated.

He seemed convinced she was telling the truth and answered her question about the Team's current and, for a time, past pursuer. "Decker is a guy in the army who's convinced we're guilty of crimes that weren't really our fault."

"Weren't really your fault?" she asked quizzically.

"It's basically a long story," Hannibal said.

"So, Decker is what - I mean, in terms of rank?" she said, changing the subject slightly.

"He's a colonel, like I am," the snow-colored man responded, puzzled by her curiosity. "Why?"

"No reason in particular . . . it's just that I'm not really from around here, so I don't know who this Decker person is, or why the military is after you, or even who you guys are," she explained.

"Where are you from?" Face asked.

"That's a long story unto itself. I've lived a significant portion of my life away from here," she replied vaguely, hoping she didn't reveal too much about who and what she really was.

"Oh," Face said.

"We're the A-Team," Hannibal told her.

"The A-Team," she repeated softly, and wondered about not only what it meant but what connection they had with the military. If she were still in the twenty-third century and a member of the Security League (or the League as it was commonly referred to), she would have arrested these men. But since she was a member of Intelligence, she would merely keep both eyes open.

The van finally stopped at an edifice that was probably used as an apartment building. As they walked through the front door, Kamala noticed the newspaper distribution boxes and, finally, discovered the "where" and "when" of her surroundings: Los Angeles, 1988.

They went into a device that looked similar to a lift, only unlike the lifts she was accustomed to where one merely told the thing where to go, verbally. Here, one had to press a button to get where one wanted to go.

When they got out, she noticed a sign nearby stating that it was called an "elevator." "Strange," she said softly to herself.

"Excuse me?" Hannibal asked.

"Oh, nothing," she muttered.

When they walked up to a doorway, she noticed that the door didn't open automatically, the way she normally saw a door open. It had to be opened by a key.

She moved her right hand towards the golden "locket" hanging from her neck. When the "locket" opened, the inside metamorphosized to fit any lock, or it could become any tool needed - something that was useful for someone trying to override security codes. It was also a one-of-a-kind item, created by Katanean Shapeshifters for her great-great-grandmother Kala. Not only had she been the queen of the now-extinct world - a position which had given her absolute power since Katan was controlled by women - she had also been probably thousands of years old when she died.

After the door was opened, the group consisting of four men, a woman, and a boy walked into a lavish, nineteen-eighties-style apartment.

"All right, Jason, why were those guys after you?" Hannibal asked the young, brown-haired boy.

"Thanks for everything . . . but . . . I really have to be going now," the boy said nervously as he began walking out the door.

"The next time you might not be so lucky, little brother," B.A. stated.

"I know, but . . ." Jason's voice trailed off.

"Why are those guys after you?" Hannibal repeated.

"I don't know," the boy replied.

"You don't know?" Kamala chimed in,

sounding as if she didn't believe what the child had just said.

"Well, I *do* know, but I don't want my dad to get hurt," he responded, hesitantly.

"Wait a minute," Face interjected, "how would telling us be hurting your father?"

The boy answered, "My father saw someone get killed . . . and ever since then this group of men have been after us. They even beat-up my younger brother. He had to go to the hospital. He's still there. My dad was the only one who saw the crime."

"So," Hannibal concluded, "a group of guys, probably working for the slimeball who murdered someone, is going around and making sure that the only witness to that murder doesn't testify so their boss doesn't see jail time."

". . . And in order to make sure of it, they not only harass people, they take out insurance," Kamala added, nodding to Jason. "How typical."

The men looked at her strangely. "Typical of whom?" Hannibal asked the woman.

"Never mind," she responded.

"Hannibal, we better get these guys," B.A. said. "Beating up people who don't deserve it is one thing - beating up kids is another."

"Murdock," the A-Team's leader began to ask the one-time mental patient, "by any chance, did you happen to catch the license plate number of that car?"

"Yes, Colonel, I did," the pilot responded, as he got a folded piece of paper out of jacket pocket and handed it to the cigar smoker.

"Face," Smith started, "I want you to go down to the DMV and find out who owns this car. Once we know that, we'll probably know which dirtbag is tormenting our young friend."

"Hannibal, I was wondering if I could possibly borrow Kamala," the other blue-eyed man inquired.

Hannibal glanced over at the mysterious woman. "Well, Miss, it's your decision."

"I'll go - but only on account of Jason," she responded.

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"*A'la'dere N'arcia*," (pronounced: A-la-der-ee-na-ray-cha) Kamala began, speaking in Katanean. It was a language that no one on this planet, at least not this time-frame, would know. She was saying the Katanean greeting to a woman behind a desk at the DMV.

"Excuse me?" the middle-aged, blond-haired woman asked.

"*A'la'dere N'aril/N'aren*," Kamala uttered the Katanean phrase for "how horrible/something terrible."

"What language are you speaking, Miss?" the woman asked.

"Excuse me," Face interjected from his place in line behind Kamala. "May I be of some assistance?"

"Maybe," the woman said. "This woman is trying to tell me something and I don't understand a word she's saying. I don't even know what language she's speaking.

"Ah yes, I wouldn't expect you to," Face commented. "You see, this woman is from a small, almost unheard-of-European nation. Hardly anyone even knows it exists or what it is even called. Let me see if I can translate for you."

"*A'gri K'erlandra*," the brown-eyed woman told the blonde, saying that she came in peace and to hold her fire.

"I believe what this woman is trying to say is that someone sold her a car and didn't properly transfer it to her, and has since moved. She also says that she has the license plate number and was wondering if she might be able to look up the person's address, so she can contact them about the matter," Face explained.

"All right, I'll see what I can do," the woman responded.

"Do you have the license number, Miss?"

"*A'rnorgra Cali*?" Face repeated the phrase that Kamala had taught him earlier. She had told him that it meant "please" in her mother's native tongue.

"*A'Shangri*," she told him "be" in Katanean (there are no conjugations in the language). She then handed him the same piece of paper that Murdock had given Hannibal, who in turn had given it to Kamala. The woman typed the plate number into the computer and it soon began printing out. "Tell her I sympathize with her and that I hope everything works out."

"I will," Face said, receiving both the tag number and the newly-printed sheet with the car's owner and giving it to Kamala.

"*A'la'gra N'ola*," she muttered "thank you" in Katanean.

When Kamala walked out of the building, followed by Face a few minutes later to throw off suspicion from the DMV employees, she moved away from a couple of men wearing black uniforms with some sort of badge on the shirt. They looked like city police. Standing a few feet away were a few other men dressed as state police. She knew who they were from having to read books on Earth history while she was at the Military Academy on Benar. And since shapeshifters had perfect memories and thus never forgot anything - a trait she had inherited from her father - she knew that they had better be moving before the police spotted Face.

He caught up with her. "That's a beautiful language," he commented.

"Hmmm?" she responded, not really paying attention to what he had just said. "Oh, I'm sorry . . . it's just that . . . well, I spotted some policemen over by that tree."

"Well, we better move it then," he replied. They quickly got into his prized 'vette and began to take off in the opposite direction of the police. "So tell me, what was that lovely little language that you were speaking and that you taught me a few words of?" the blond-haired man asked her.

"Let's just say that it's a language that you'll probably never hear again in your lifetime. It's called Katanean," she informed him. "It's spoken all over the area I'm originally from, despite the authorities trying to see to it otherwise."

"Katanean?" he repeated.

"Like I said, you probably have never heard of it nor will you ever hear of it again," she told him. "There are only six of us left, you know." Before he could say anything, she held her hand up, in a silent protest. "Most of my mother's people chose not to join the local tyranny and paid the price for it with their lives. I don't know why I'm even telling you all this.

"You're not with some sort of cult, are you?" he asked, hoping he didn't offend her.

"No, no, it's just that my past is a little -" she paused, hoping to find the right words, "- shady, and there are some aspects that are a little too painful to want to remember."

"I understand," he responded, wondering what she meant by what she had just said.

Chapter 2

"I knew it had to be someone big," Hannibal said as he read the printout from the DMV. "According to this, Jake Sangrin is the owner of this car."

"Who's Jake Sangrin?" Kamala wondered aloud.

"He's an oil tycoon with a few rumored mob connections," the colonel responded.

"Oh," she replied.

"Hey, I remember reading something in the paper about how he was going to court tomorrow over a few shall we say 'financial problems'," Face mentioned.

"And now he goes beatin' up innocent kids. Hannibal, he needs to be stopped," B.A. stated.

"He almost sounds as bad as my step-grandfather, Dekong," Kamala commented.

"You know, Colonel, Billy says that this man needs to be taught a lesson," Murdock said as he pet his imaginary dog.

"Shut up, fool!" B.A. remarked in agitation. "You don't have no dog, besides, I thought you were cured of your craziness!"

"I was, big guy, but Billy insisted on leaving the hospital with me."

Kamala smiled at the exchange. She was often told how her bantering with Shales was thought to be to very amusing. He was always trying to come on to her and she would shoot him down every time.

"Do you find something amusing?" Murdock asked her, kindly.

"Oh, it's nothing really. You two remind me of something back home which other people seem to find amusing," she said, grinning,

"Since our friend likes giving other people shake-ups, why not be generous and give him one ourselves," Hannibal suggested, clearly amused as he puffed away at his cigar.

"He's on the jazz, man, he's on the jazz," B.A. commented.

"The jazz?" Kamala inquired aloud. The only type of jazz she knew of was of the musical variety.

"It's what we call Hannibal's crazy enthusiasm," Face explained.

"And the source of some of our greatest screw-ups," B.A. added.

Hannibal laughed.

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"Delivery," H.M. Murdock, in disguise as a gardening supply truck driver (vehicle and front provided by Face), told the little security box that was attached to one of the large brick newel posts.

"I'm sorry sir, we weren't expecting any deliveries today," came the voice at the other end.

"Well, someone from this address ordered a dozen bags of fertilizer," he responded. "And if I take it back, your boss isn't going to be the least bit happy about it and guess who will be paying for *that* mistake!"

"All right," the other man finally relented. "Go right ahead and wait for the gate to open,"

Murdock waited for a moment before he heard a buzzing sound coming from the same little box that he had just talked into. The gate had not opened. "Why isn't this gate open?" he asked the person who was, obviously, trying to get his attention.

"What company did you say you were from?" a different, huskier, accented voice inquired. Murdock guessed that the man was from Texas, and from what Hannibal had told him and their teammates had to be none other than Jake Sangrin.

"Uh, Picture Perfect Gardens," the pilot responded, a little more nervous than he had been a few minutes ago. It seemed that another one of Hannibal's plans wouldn't work out exactly how the colonel would have wanted it.

Murdock then heard some shuffling behind him. Turning around, he saw Kamala behind him, moving towards the door, followed by Face. He noted the annoyed look on the woman's face. She had insisted on not being left behind to take care of Jason - she had no problems with the boy, just the principal of not "being in on the action."

"Let me handle it," she told Face.

"Look, I'm not saying I don't want you're help -"

Kamala cut Face off before he could finish. "Listen, I know more about disabling security systems, codes, etcetera than you could possibly imagine!" She then added, "This is no more than child's play for me. I've been doing this sort of thing for years - probably longer than you have. And another thing, I've also managed to bypass security systems, passwords, codes and such that were much more complicated and difficult than this!"

Noticing the obvious agitation in her voice, Face complied with her request. "As I was saying, if you need my assistance in, you know, holding tools, or that sort of thing, than let me know," he replied, caving into her behest.

Both men watched as she first pulled the covering off the box and then really began working. Removing from her neck what they both thought was a locket, she opened it up. It became an odd, rod-shaped tool, which she used to cut the wiring. This action caught the men by surprise, not only because of the unusual tool which neither had ever seen before, or the fact that the inside of the locket had metamorphosized into the tool, but rather because of the way that she was working. She cut certain wires and quickly attached them to other wires; for what reason she was connecting the wires, neither of them knew.

"Finished," she finally stated.

"Where did you learn how to do that?" Face asked her, amazed at what she had just done.

"Let's just say, I had a little help from home in learning that," she replied. It also didn't hurt to have worked in the League and Intelligence, or that it was a primitive system.

"Why did you connect the wiring?" Murdock asked out of curiosity.

"That way, if they run a check by computer on their security system, they won't suspect it's been tampered with or know what's going on until you hit them," she explained.

After Face and Murdock put the cover back

on the box, Murdock climbed back into the driver's seat while Kamala keyed into the box that it was "okay" for them to pass and to let the gate open. Face then helped her ascend into the back of the van with the bags of fertilizer as he got in himself and grabbed his machine gun.

The gate, finally, opened and the delivery truck entered the grounds of the palatial-like estate. There were five noticeable gunmen, most armed with machine guns or pistols. One seemed to be armed with a heavier-grade machine gun, the sort Hannibal used that time that the team had crashed somewhere in South Carolina, near those crazy mountain men who tried to burn a surveyor at the stake. Both Face and Murdock knew that it was the gunmen that weren't in plain sight that would get you.

The man with the heavier machine gun and one of the men holding a pistol walked over to the where Murdock was. The man with the pistol held the end of the barrel at the former mental patient.

"All right, you, now get out or else," the gunman with the pistol imparted. Murdock complied and got out of the truck.

"Now," the other man said, "we're going to see what it is you have back here."

"Listen, I was told to deliver the fertilizer to the gardener," Murdock said as he was familiarizing himself with the terrain.

"Yeah, well, we're the unpacking crew," the man with the heavier weapon said, chuckling at his own remark. "Come on, Jeff, and give me a hand with opening the back," he told the man with the pistol.

"All right, Larry," Jeff responded.

No sooner had Jeff and Larry opened the back than Face pointed his gun at both men. "Now, if I were you I'd drop those guns," Face informed them.

Murdock picked both guns up after they complied. Keeping the machine gun for himself he reluctantly offered the pistol to Kamala, who flinched at the notion.

"What's wrong?" he asked her.

"Nothing, it's just that I have a strict policy when it comes to guns of any sort - I never use them. It's something I inherited from my father and neither of us has seen it necessary, in our lives, to use them. It gives me a sick feeling at the bottom of my stomach to even think about using one," she replied.

Murdock nodded his head in acknowledgment. He gave the small gun to Face, who in turn, holstered it. While Face kept his machine gun set on both scoundrels, Murdock and Kamala commenced tying them up.

Just then an eruption of gunfire came from the

three remaining gunmen. Face pulled Kamala behind him, much to the woman's objection, and began firing. Murdock grabbed the sack containing the handful of grenades and took one of the avocado-shaped weapons. Pulling the pin, he threw it at the section of driveway that two of the gunmen were standing near. It exploded, causing both men to leap - one into the bushes, the other near the front steps. Face managed to keep the third man at bay.

Seeing no feasible way out, the man surrendered, much to his distaste. Hannibal climbed over the high, brick wall and into the luscious foliage surrounding Sangrin's pool. Grabbing his pistol, he approached the villainous tycoon. "If I were you, I'd take that hand away from the underside of that table," the colonel stated to the man.

"What? I was just going to get my drink," the other man responded.

"More like you were heading to grab this," Hannibal said, lifting a small yet powerful gun from its resting place under the table.

"Who . . . who are you?" Sangrin asked.

"The one holding the guns," came Hannibal's answer.

"My men will be here in just a matter of seconds. You'll never get away with this," the miscreant informed the colonel.

"Oh, I think he will," a new voice to the conversation. It belonged to Face, who emerged with Murdock and Kamala from the house, pointing their guns at two of Sangrin's men.

"Nice work, guys," Hannibal commented.

"What do you men want? I'll pay you anything," Sangrin said in desperation. "What will it cost me to hire you?"

"One, we're not for sale," Hannibal said as he saw Kamala, who was also holding the sack of grenades, put her hand over Face's mouth. Hannibal couldn't help but be amused. "And two, we're very selective of our clients, meaning we don't work for slime like you," the colonel added as he lit another cigar. "But I can tell you what we'd like - for you to leave the Rhines family alone. See, the way I see it, you have one of two choices: either comply with what I want, or I come after you, and, trust me, you wouldn't like that."

Sangrin was stewing, as he watched the match for the cigar being placed into his glass of lemonade. The Team, plus Kamala, began walking towards the wall that the colonel had just scaled.

"I want those guys and I want them dead, you hear me!" Sangrin yelled at his men. "How could you let those guys in here, anyway? I thought you were supposed to be the best!"

"But, Mr. Sangrin, those guys were real pros and -" one of the men started.

"Save it! When I hired you, all of you had come with more recommendations than one could possibly imagine. But no, instead I get seven armed men who can't defend themselves against two men and a woman! A woman! I mean, I'm really going all out this time," Sangrin stated, still angry.

"But, boss, we'll do better next time," another man chimed in.

"I told you all to shut up! If hiring pros is what it's going to take than I'll go hire pros!" Sangrin was still flustered.

"I know who two of those guys are, sir," a third man uttered. "Templeton Peck and 'Hannibal' Smith - they're the A-Team. They're wanted by the military for robbing the Bank of Hanoi and murdering some colonel guy - I think his name was Morrison. Yeah, the army's got a big reward out for these guys and if they get caught, well, they get shot."

"How do you know this?!" Sangrin asked the man.

"I saw their pictures at the post office once and my Cousin Louie was an MP during the trial - heard everything," the man responded.

"Well, well," the Texan tycoon mused, "the A-Team. And I'll be the one to have brought them down."

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The A-Team, meanwhile, rode in B.A.'s prize van. "Now, if I'm right, Sangrin is pretty angry right now and will probably want revenge for our little visit," Hannibal commented. "So I plan on getting Jason and his family a little protection courtesy of Decker and the army. That should kill two birds with one stone," he said, smiling at that prospect.

"Meanwhile, we'll be doing what?" Face asked the white-haired Team leader.

"If Sangrin gets as angry as I think he'll get, after he meets up with Decker, then he's bound to tilt his hand in our favor," he told his lieutenant.

"And what if he continues to be the same mean-spirited monster he's always been, plus a bit of anger?" Kamala asked him.

"It's been my experience that when people get angry, all they focus on is that anger, thus they make a mistake in the process," Hannibal explained.

"And in my experience, you get someone angry at you and you wind up dead," Kamala remarked.

"Well, we'll just have to make sure that doesn't happen," Hannibal responded.

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Jake Sangrin sat in his office at home, pondering Smith's next move, when he suddenly received a phone call - something he had specifically told his men that he didn't want today.

"Hello," he said in his accented voice.

"Yeah, boss, I was just lettin' ya' know that we sort of kinda' got a problem here," came the response. Obviously, it was one of his men.

"What do you mean we 'sort of kinda' have a problem?" the other man asked him.

"I mean, the army's here, at the Rhines' house, and they don't look like they're here to throw a party," the subordinate commented.

"Blast," the elder man said, clearly annoyed at what he had just heard. "This Smith character is smarter than I had anticipated. I'll be down there in a few minutes." With that, he hung up the phone and began moving towards the garage.

Chapter 3

When Sangrin finally got there, after having hit every traffic light and traffic jam - not to mention every other conceivable reason to be late, he noticed a fairly large ensemble of army men. Most of them were holding machine guns and wore armbands saying "MP" on them.

"Excuse me, sir," he said to one of the members of the military police. "But can you tell me where I can find your commanding officer?" Smith's own trick was about to work against him.

The man in uniform pointed to a man wearing a green hat who was talking to an African-American man. Sangrin began to approach the two men. "Are you the man in charge here?" Sangrin asked the man in the hat.

"Yes," the man replied, with his slightly-gruff voice. "I'm Colonel Decker, what do you want?"

"I have some information that might interest you," Sangrin told Decker.

"Stop playing games and just spit it out," Decker told Sangrin.

"I have information concerning the A-Team," Sangrin informed Decker.

"The A-Team, eh?" Decker asked.

"I know where they are. Sort of," Sangrin told the colonel.

"Sort of?" Decker asked. "What do you mean 'sort of'?"

"I mean that they're in the area and that they threatened me recently. That man - Smith, I think his name was - held a gun at me while three of his buddies went and beat up some

friends I had over. Smith said that if I didn't do as he asked that he'd come back and kill me and my friends."

"Were these two of the men that attacked your friends?" Captain Crane asked Sangrin, showing him a photograph of the Team.

"Him I recognize," Sangrin said, pointing towards Face. "Never seen the other guy, though."

"Peck is in on it, but Baracus isn't?" Decker asked, trying to verify what the man had just said. "Tell me, what did Smith's other accomplices look like?"

"Well, there was another man, a little taller than that Peck character. Didn't really get a good look at him though because my view was blocked with one of my friends who he was holding a machine gun on.

"The other friend of theirs was a woman. She seemed more like an accessory than an actual participant."

"We'll take care of it, sir," Decker told the man. "Captain, I want you to station some men here, just in case the A-Team and their accomplices decide to show up here again," he ordered his second-in-command.

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"Guys, I've got wonderful news," Hannibal started. They had dropped Jason off shortly before Decker had arrived. "According to Jason, Decker came by and left some men behind to look after the Rhines family."

"Something tells me he told you a lot more than that," Kamala remarked. When they had dropped Jason off, she had demanded to go, saying that she would be an asset and that she could handle herself. Not surprisingly, given his feelings for her, Face had backed her up on it, even though he thought it would be dangerous for her, let alone him, to go.

"Yeah, Sangrin came and told Decker about our little visit and exaggerated it to make us seem like the bad guys," Hannibal explained.

"Well, in case you forgot, in Decker's eyes we *are* the bad guys - wanted for robbing the Bank of Hanoi. And we have a death mark against us for murdering Colonel Morrison," Face stated.

Kamala eyed them all cautiously. If they had lived in the twenty-third century and she was still a member of the League, she wouldn't have hesitated to arrest them. Yet, both her instincts and acquired knowledge told her that she was missing some big part of the puzzle and should not jump to conclusions because she didn't have all the facts.

"Robbing the Bank of Hanoi? Murdering a

colonel?" she prodded, hoping for a response.

"Actually it's a long story which, depending on who you ask, makes us look like either the bad guys or the Three Stooges," Hannibal explained.

"Well, I'd certainly love to hear it," the Kormana woman said.

"Maybe I could tell you over dinner. You know, candlelight, soft music, and that sort of thing," Face told her.

"Nice try, but it won't work," Kamala said smiling sheepishly at him.

Murdock glanced first at Face, then at Kamala. "Strike two for the Faceman." Then he told Kamala the abridged version of what happened.

"B.A., "Hannibal began after Murdock was finished, "did you manage to get that bug planted?"

"Wait a minute," Kamala started, "if we already know Sangrin is guilty and why he's harassing the Rhines, then why plant a bug?"

"Simple, my dear. Sangrin is the type who would clean up his mess, so he wouldn't be accused of making one in the first place. Therefore, we make sure that we catch the mess. That's also the reason that the bug B.A. installed is connected to a recording device which I've hidden."

"So if he discovers the bug, he'll think that we're the only ones who've heard it," Kamala concluded.

"Correct," the white-haired colonel responded.

"Yeah, well, what are you going to do about Decker? You do remember Decker and the fact that he won't hesitate to shoot us?" Face asked anxiously.

"Patience, Lieutenant," the colonel replied, puffing away at his cigar. "Decker will be doing the honors of arresting Sangrin and his men."

"You know, there's one thing that still bothers me. Why is Sangrin even out of jail if he's going to stand trial for a murder charge?" Kamala inquired.

"Jason says it's because Sangrin hasn't been arrested yet. The police discovered the body a day or two before we even met Jason," B.A. told the woman.

"Well, in the meantime we have us a turkey to catch," Hannibal stated, looking amused.

"He's on the jazz again," B.A. commented.

Chapter 4

Jake Sangrin sat in his office, at work. He peered out the window to see that the new security procedures had been installed. After his early morning conversation with Colonel Decker, who had told him that his men were scouting the area

for the fugitives and their accomplice, Sangrin had felt the urge to "beef-up" security as a precaution. Smith and his precious A-Team wouldn't get past him twice!

It seemed that ever since he'd killed his recent victim, his life was spiraling downward, as if a much higher authority was suddenly holding him accountable for his wrongdoings. He hadn't slept since day one of this fiasco with Smith and company. He couldn't even remember the last time he had eaten anything.

Sighing, he got up and walked over towards the safe containing the other evidence from his latest victim - evidence that he hadn't had time to destroy. Sangrin figured this was as good a time as any to dispose of it.

He was just reaching for his lighter when he heard an explosion coming from one of the adjacent rooms. Startled, he quickly dropped both the unignited lighter and the folder with the "missing" files. Standing in the doorway was Smith, flanked by a large, angry, dark-skinned man holding one of the two gunmen who had been standing at his door like a child holding a toy. The other gunman lay unconscious on the floor. Sangrin was, for the first time in his life, terrified.

"Wha . . . wha . . . what do you want from me?" the oil tycoon asked.

"I believe we've had this conversation before, but you didn't listen to me and now I'm keeping my word. I've come back to get you," the white-haired man replied.

"My offer still stands - whatever your heart desires, Smith," Sangrin pleaded.

"As I said before, I'm not for sale," Hannibal responded, nodding his head towards B.A.

B.A. Baracus threw the man he was holding against the wall and slammed his fist against his palm. "See, B.A. here is really upset over the way you've been treating the Rhines family, and is very much interested in crushing you to a pulp," the colonel explained. B.A. growled and Sangrin cowered towards his window. "I see you have other evidence, and in exchange for B.A. not pulverizing you into a puddle, you hand me that evidence now. If you refuse, B.A. crushes you, and I still get that folder over there."

"That's blackmail!" the Texan shouted.

"B.A. -" the cigar-smoker began.

"All right, all right, already," the extortionee relented. He went over, picked up the envelope and gave it to Hannibal. "You'll never get away with this. Decker is on his way as we speak."

"Tell Decker we said 'hi' and 'sorry we missed him'," Hannibal said, grinning at the prospect.

"Hold it right there, Smith," said the familiar voice of Colonel Roderick Decker.

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Four blocks away was B.A.'s prized van. Murdock was whistling to himself, sitting in the driver's seat. The fact that Murdock was to drive the van had not sat too well with B.A. at first. Face was looking through a pair of binoculars while flirting with a peeved Kamala, who was mentally going over something.

Face sat up a little straighter as he saw Hannibal and B.A. being led off by a group of MP's and none other than the Team's number one nemesis. The blue-eyed passenger stopped talking and lightly tapped Murdock on the shoulder. Murdock, noticing what the other man was trying to show him, started the engine. Kamala quickly glanced over Face's shoulder to see what all the commotion was about.

"Great, now what?" the woman asked. Then an idea came to her. Shaking her head at an unlikely solution to Hannibal and B.A.'s capture, she decided to try it out. She had been in much worse scrapes and gotten out all right. "Forget what I just said, I have an idea which should work," the exotic-looking female stated.

Both men eyed her cautiously. "'Should' work?" Face prodded.

"Yes," she replied. "I'll admit that it might sound a little risky, but what other choice have we?"

"None," Murdock said grimly.

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Face had to admit to himself that Kamala was becoming more and more of an enigma to him. First, she had come out of almost nowhere to save Murdock, then there was her appearance and the strange knife, not to mention her locket and very name. When he had devised his scam, she had insisted on using a language only known to her. While they were leaving the DMV, she had told him of the plight of her people and that the language she had spoken was called Katanean. Why was she so skeptical to talk about her past and where she was from?

Then there was Hannibal's other "chore," the breaking into of Sangrin's home. Kamala had shown Face and Murdock a strange tool and a great deal of knowledge of alarms. How could she have known such a thing?

During the time he had known her, he had tried some of his best lines to try and convince her to go out with him - all of which resulted in her shooting him down. The only time he had even

come close was when she was telling him about a part of her past. He didn't even know her last name.

Curious, he had made an excursion to city hall and the library to find out anything he could about the mysterious woman, and learned nothing. There was no mention of anyone named "Kamala" or anything about the Katanean language, or anything remotely close to what she had told him about herself, which left a bunch of unanswered questions.

Shaking all that aside, he was still interested in her and hoped she would come around and go out with him. *Who knows*, he thought to himself, *maybe I'll learn the reason why city hall and the library doesn't keep records on her or what she told me or why she's been lying.*

"Hey, Faceman, you and me need to switch places," Murdock told the other man. Face knew that Murdock was obviously trying to snap him out of his "zombie-like" trance. The con-artist relented and they switched seats.

Kamala glanced at Face once more. She knew that her instincts told her to just go ahead and tell him. Yet her heart told her to let him down gently, at the right moment. She had never had this sort of internal conflict before, so why was it starting now? It seemed so much easier to tell Shales to buzz off than to tell Face that she wasn't interested in him. Sure, he was attractive - by human standards - but his ways and just the fact that he conned people out of and into things bothered her.

Her father had once told her to trust her instincts because they were never wrong, at least for Shapeshifters and Kataneans. True to his word, they never were. Yet, now her instincts were deadlocked with her emotions - a deadly war for an Intelligence agent. She knew she had to resolve this thing soon, before anything got out of hand.

She sighed at the dreaded thought of having to tell him. She knew that after this mission, she needed to be home again. After all, if it wasn't for her, her family's life would be relatively dull.

Home. Home for her was the cloaked world of Mycelia; hidden from both the Alliance and the Organization. Throughout her many years of living, she had been known for telling people how it was. Her family had objected to her leaving the seclusion of Mycelia for the "excitement" of the "outside galaxy." She had stood up to them then. Now, for the first time in her life, she felt like a jellyfish. Which led brought her around to the main problem: finding a way to tell Face.

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Kamala quickly bolted towards where most of the military police were huddled. She was careful so as not to be seen by anyone. She dropped a grenade near them, but not too close, for she didn't want any of them killed or seriously injured.

She was followed by the "distraction" - Murdock driving the van. He was wearing a gorilla mask disguise. Face shot at the army vehicles' tires with a machine gun, blowing them out in the process. Just then the grenade went off, sending soldiers every which way, none harmed worse than a few cuts and bruises and other minor problems.

Decker, seeing the commotion, turned around fast enough to see Smith and Baracus sprinting towards the van, followed by the silhouette of a young woman - probably the A-Team's latest "accessory." He knew now that Peck and another accomplice were also in on it. The question was, who were the Team's new accomplices?

Chapter 5

"So, now what do we do? Decker now knows about Murdock and Kamala," an anxious Face asked Hannibal.

"Yeah, Colonel," Murdock began, "I kinda' liked having my anonymity."

"Correction, Lieutenant, Decker knows we have two accomplices. For all he knows, a gorilla and a ghost joined our outfit," Hannibal replied.

"A ghost?" Kamala prodded, in a semi-annoyed tone. "I didn't realize I was a spirit trapped between the world of the living and the dead." The last statement sounded sarcastic. She had phrased it from an old Earth brochure that she had seen in a museum on the human home-world.

"You were pretty far away from where Decker was standing," the white-haired man explained. "Anyway, I now have the other evidence that we need to prove it was Sangrin."

"What made you so sure that Sangrin even kept evidence?" Face asked his commanding officer.

"The slimier the slimeball, the more likely they are to keep files they don't want found," the colonel rationalized.

"Didn't you say something about how a guy like Sangrin was likely to 'clean-up his mess'?" the exotic-looking woman asked.

"True," Hannibal reasoned. "But guys like that also keep 'unwanted' dirt around. Dirt that they haven't cleaned up yet."

"And all that's left is to catch Sangrin--without getting anyone arrested," Kamala pointed out.

"My guess is that Sangrin is pretty steamed by now. I think we should help him blow his top," Hannibal said, grinning to himself.

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Sangrin paced the ground around the parking garage. This situation was more than a mere nightmare for him. First, he had had a group of fugitives, plus a couple of friends, come in and break into his home. Then, he had had that same lot break into his office and escape from the military!

He took out his handkerchief and began wiping the glistening beads of sweat off his face. It seemed that this garage was his last sanctuary. He knew he had no where else to turn without incriminating either himself or any of his mob partners. Smith already had his own evidence to convict him. That plus the bug that his men had discovered earlier that day - planted, no doubt, by one of Smith's men - would surely guarantee a conviction on murder and other charges.

He sighed, for he had almost forgotten about the witness to the murder. That too would not be in his favor. He knew he had to do something, but what? He couldn't very well go and terrorize the Rhines' because of the guards that had been posted by Colonel Decker.

A sheepish grin appeared on his face as he thought about a way to gain leverage on the notorious A-Team.

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Hannibal was smoking his cigar when the phone rang. Picking it up, he was about to begin to speak in an accent in case it was the military or any other suspicious person. He decided against it when he heard Jason on the phone stating that Sangrin had kidnapped his hospitalized younger brother.

"Sangrin's got Jason's younger brother," the white-haired man informed his Team.

"Well, you have to admit that he's determined," Kamala commented.

"And I thought we were the ones who were supposed to have the advantage," Face grumbled.

"From what I gather, Sangrin is probably down to his last few men. Decker has the evidence, including the tapes recorded through the bug, so he and Sangrin are no longer allies. That means that his job should be a piece of cake," Hannibal responded.

The men moaned. "Am I missing something here?" Kamala asked anxiously.

"Whenever Hannibal says it'll be 'a piece of cake' it usually means trouble is up ahead," Face explained.

"Yeah, and the last time, Hannibal had me dragged into a helicopter. And B.A. Baracus don't fly - especially not with this crazy fool here doing the flyin'," B.A. said, sounding a little agitated.

Kamala shook her head. In the twenty-third century, being afraid to fly was considered almost impossible to imagine. No one flew anything even remotely resembling an airplane - they all used shuttles if they were exploring unknown terrain and could afford it or they used an ATD - artificial teleportation device.

"Oh, come on, big guy, you were the only one who wasn't hurt in the crash," Murdock pointed out to the large, mohawked man.

"Yeah, but my van got hurt when we fled and I almost lost my tools because of Hannibal and his craziness," B.A. responded.

"Getting back to the main point," Kamala interjected.

"Right," Hannibal stated. "Look, Sangrin is still convinced that we have the evidence against him. So, we let him continue thinking we still have it and meet him - with a few surprises in store."

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Hannibal Smith, seemingly unarmed and alone, walked into the park - decidedly neutral territory. Jake Sangrin, flanked by two of his goons, both holding machine guns, sat on a bench near a large oak tree, holding a cellular phone in his left hand.

The white-haired colonel approached closer but not too close to Sangrin. "All right, I'm here," the leader of the A-Team stated. "Now, what do you want?"

Sangrin gave the colonel a devious grin, one that looked like he was the Cheshire cat who had swallowed an awfully large canary. "Now, it seems the tables have turned in my favor, wouldn't you agree Mister . . . oh, pardon me . . . Colonel Smith?"

Hannibal said nothing in response. He would let the other man gloat, for he would have the last laugh in this situation.

"I see that you're awfully quiet today. Tongue-tied at my defeating you or just a loss of pride on your part?" Sangrin's grin grew even wider, giving Hannibal a sickening feeling at the pit of his stomach.

"Anyway, I'll gladly hand over the Rhines

kid if you agree to hand over your evidence against me and surrender to me. I hear there's a pretty high price on the heads of you and your men - except for that fourth man of yours and the girl. I'll deal with them after you, Peck, and Baracus have been dealt with by the military. That fourth fellow would make an excellent addition to my security force - or I could always tell the army that he's been in on your treachery from the start. Now as for the girl, I think I have just the place for someone like that." Sangrin grinned even more, to the point where Hannibal thought the man's cheeks would explode.

"Well, you have me," Hannibal stated. "Now release the boy."

"All in due time, Colonel Smith. All in due time," Sangrin said, continuing his gloating. The man then snapped his fingers and the two men who were standing next to him began moving towards Hannibal.

Just then three men popped out of the nearby brush and one of them began firing between Sangrin's men. The other two men, B.A. and Murdock, rushed towards the villains and began fighting with them.

B.A. had no difficulty in knocking out his opponent, while the other foe, who was almost as big as B.A., was giving Murdock a real work-out. B.A., seeing his friend's plight, stepped in and began fighting off his new adversary. The other man threw a punch at B.A. which didn't phase the machinist in the slightest. Startled, the man tried once more. B.A., looking even more agitated, stuck at the man's face and sent him heading towards the soft grass, unconscious.

Sangrin, seeing the fiasco and the fact he was now virtually indefensible, began running towards the opposite direction from where the members of the A-Team stood. Sangrin was soon followed by Hannibal.

The Texan began making twists and turns, trying to lose the colonel. He thought he had when he reached an area closer to the edge of the tall, black and highly-decorative cast iron fence. Unbeknownst to him, Kamala had metamorphosized into the form of a large maple tree. Hannibal hadn't agreed to letting her come, claiming it was too dangerous for her. So she had come anyway, without anyone knowing it. He stopped and took a breath, for he was close to the point of exhaustion. He decided to walk just a bit further when he tripped over the root of the "tree."

A few seconds later and Hannibal arrived, holding his favorite pistol at Sangrin. The colonel picked Sangrin up by the arm and the two headed towards the park bench where Sangrin's goons were tied up. Sangrin turned around long

enough to see Kamala metamorphosize into her humanoid form.

The man rubbed his eyes in disbelief. "I must be hallucinating or going crazy," he stated in a fatigued tone.

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A half hour later and the Team, after picking up Kamala (she teleported herself to the place that she had been dropped off at), was on its way to the warehouse where Jason's younger brother was being kept. Hannibal held a gun to Sangrin's back as he led the them into the dusty old building. The guards gave themselves up the moment they saw that their boss had been captured. Murdock and Face grabbed the men's guns and held them towards Sangrin's men.

The young boy lay on a filthy cot in the center of the warehouse. He was unconscious and appeared to be very pale. He also had numerous bandages and noticeable bruises on most visible places.

"We need to get him to a hospital," B.A. suggested.

"I love it when a plan comes together," Hannibal responded.

With that, B.A. picked up the sick child and carried him into the van, and then they dropped him off at the hospital.

Epilogue

"It's lucky for us that that tree was there. Otherwise, we probably wouldn't have caught Sangrin," Face commented.

"Yeah, where did that tree come from?" B.A. asked. "I don't remember seeing it there before."

"Maybe it appeared out of nowhere. Or maybe it was an alien from outer space disguised as a tree," Murdock suggested. He got quite a few weird looks from his companions.

"Shut up, fool. That ain't no alien!" B.A. stated.

"The point is that we nailed Sangrin, even though I also don't remember there being a tree there," Hannibal commented. Thinking back to all the times he had been to that park, he wondered why he had never remembered there being a tree in that section of the park - at least none that close to the fence.

Kamala couldn't help but smile to herself as she walked alongside the Team and Jason near a large pond in a suburban park.

"So what will happen to Sangrin now?" Jason inquired.

"With all the evidence we gathered against



him and with your father's testimony, Sangrin will get at least a life sentence," Hannibal replied. "He shouldn't bother you or your family for a long, long time."

"By the way," B.A. began, "how's your brother doin'?"

"He's doing a lot better. The doctor said he should be out in a week, or maybe even less!" Jason responded.

Face followed Kamala past the wooded section of the park. The woman was clearly in a hurry to get somewhere, so he had to run to keep up with her.

"Kamala, wait!" he yelled, with a slight sound of tiredness in his voice.

She halted and let him catch his breath. She knew that this time would come. She just didn't expect it to come this soon. Moving a strand of raven hair away from her face, she glanced at him, hoping what she had to say didn't hurt him too much. Although he reminded her a little bit of Shales, in the sense that he was continuously trying to get her to go out with him, he didn't have the same naiveté that Shales did. He was more seasoned in battle and definitely had a better sense of humor.

"Look, Face," she began, trying to find a better way of saying what she knew needed to be said. It seemed no matter how she said it, it was still going to hurt him. She usually had no problems phrasing things; in fact, practically everyone knew her for her bluntness. So why was she having a problem telling him what she knew in her heart of hearts needed to be said? She was about to finish her sentence when he put his index finger on her lips.

"Kamala," he said in a soft tone. "I know there are things about your past that may seem a little 'spotty', but that doesn't matter to me. All I want is get to know you better - not your past or anything else."

Taking a deep breath, trying to find her constant companion - her inner strength - she moved his finger away from her mouth. "Face, there's a lot about me that you really don't know and you wouldn't begin to understand in your lifetime. What I told you about myself barely scratches the surface. I could tell you things about what I've seen that would make you sick to your stomach!

"And while the sentiment is sweet, I'm engaged and have been for months now. Besides, I need to go home, to my people, where I belong. That's why I declined Hannibal's offer for me to stay on with you guys."

"Then let me at least come with you for awhile - I'll tell the guys I'm visiting a friend who lives out of town," Face responded, with a

bit of charm and a sense of humor thrown in.

She put her hands on her hips and looked skeptically at him. "Trust me, you'd want to leave the moment you arrived. And I don't think my fiancé or my family would approve. You see, my mother is a diplomat and could have you thrown into prison for looking at her the wrong way." That last bit had a strong touch of sarcasm in it.

"And your father?" Face asked, returning the joke.

"Well, he'd be the one making the arrangements to have you thrown into jail - he works as a security officer - although, not with this government," she informed him.

"I see," he said, solemnly.

"Anyway, I really need to be going now," she said, trying to change the subject.

"What's your fiancé's name?" Face asked the woman.

"Tamal," she replied, referring to the handsome Katanan man she had met and instantly fallen in love with on Mycelia.

"Well tell Tamal that if he doesn't treat you with the respect and kindness that you deserve, he'll have to answer to me and the rest of the A-Team," he told her.

She gave him a warm smile, the first that he'd seen her give, at least to him. She then, reluctantly, gave him a gentle kiss on his right cheek - a sign that that was as close to her as he was going to get and to remember her - and began walking off into the sunset, with a part of his heart. Or so he thought.

Kamala shook her head as she watched him eyeing a young, blond-haired woman who was walking her Yorkshire Terrier past him. She then saw him go up to the woman with the dog and talk to her about how he was a talent agent for dogs or something to that effect.

Just like Shales, she thought. She decided to look up Shales' genealogy when she got back, just to see if there was a connection between the two men. If there was one, it wouldn't surprise her. Kamala sighed and kept walking away from the scene. She wanted to remember this time the way it was, now. She began concentrating on her time period and the Masalka. She knew a few days had already past and needed to get into the right day and time. She focused on the variables and teleported herself home.

The End

Note: Maelek was resuscitated and did get the Masalka away from the battle.

Doin' It With Style

by Irene Snyder Schwartzing

Hannibal yawned, pushed his hat back and squinted at the pilot sprawled on the next cot. "Hey, Murdock, where's Face?"

Murdock rolled over and stretched sleepily. "He was here earlier . . . I think he went to pick up the supply drop. It is his job," he reminded his C.O.

Hannibal's eyes narrowed briefly. When the young lieutenant was particularly zealous about his duty, it usually meant he was up to something. The colonel considered getting up and finding out, then shrugged to himself. Whatever it was, he'd find out about it sooner or later. "Did he take the truck?"

"Dunno." With a mighty effort, Murdock heaved himself off the cot and got to his feet, peering down into the jungle towards the rest of camp. "I don't see it, so I guess he did."

"Well, he better get it back in time for me to get to that meeting at HQ, or I'll kick his ass back to California." With that casual threat, Colonel John Smith lit his third cigar of the day, adjusted his hat to keep the sun out of his eyes, and settled back down to enjoy a rare, relaxing afternoon.

Lieutenant Templeton Peck had indeed collected the supplies parachuted in from the supply plane. He disposed of the delivery with rare efficiency, then piled a few special crates into the back of his truck, and disappeared from camp. The other soldiers of the unit never concerned themselves with the Faceman's habits. There was no accounting for officers in the first place, they figured to themselves, and Hannibal Smith's A-Team didn't seem to figure they had to follow the rules that applied to the rest of the US Army. Face's mysterious comings and goings, and the unmarked crates that he always claimed personally, always seemed to have a reasonable explanation when you asked him about them, until later when you realized he hadn't actually told you anything. A lot of things Face said and did turned out to be like that.

Face was, in fact, heading straight to one of the few men he couldn't scam, and had, therefore, recruited to assist in his project. Sergeant B.A. Baracus looked up from his work when he heard the rattle of the truck bouncing through the jungle, and his dark face broke into a broad grin when he saw the crates piled high in the back of the truck. "Hey all right! You got it!"

Face jumped out of the truck, grinning from ear to ear. "I got 'em, every last bit! There's a general in Bangkok who gonna be real surprised to find out his treasure turned into a jeep, but we got it all now." He dropped the tailgate of the truck and began hauling crates out, quickly forming a large pile in the center of the clearing. B.A. produced a crowbar from his massive toolbox and, with a flourish, broke open the first crate. Gleaming bright chrome reflected the Vietnamese sun and the broad smiles of the two men.

"It's beautiful," B.A. said proudly. He reached in and pulled the piece out, sighting along its finish with a reverent expression on his usually scowling face.

"And, the piece de la resistance," Face announced firmly, breaking open another crate to reveal yards of snow-white canvas nestled inside. "Let's get going, B.A., I wanna get this to Hannibal before the staff meeting tonight."

It didn't take them long to finish their project, begun months before. With the aid of a lovely lady mechanic in Thailand, Face had arranged for the present to be discreetly disassembled and shipped, a few pieces at a time, while he sent replacement parts to take its place. Face and B.A. had spent hundreds of hours hidden in clearings preparing this surprise for their C.O. The final, finishing touches took them only a few hours, and the sun was still high when Face tossed the last polishing rag into the back of the truck. "Whaddaya think, B.A.? Top up, or top down?"

B.A. shook his head. "Down, no question. Man, he's gonna be grinnin' like the cat that's got the cream. Them fools at HQ gotta see that grin a mile away."

Face nodded. "You're right." He glanced at his watch. "We gotta get moving, it's only an hour to the meeting. Follow behind me, since I'll have to go slower than the truck can."

"No way to get the suspension up to par, that baby just wasn't made for movin' on roads like this," B.A. agreed. "I'll follow close, you drive careful."

"Like it was my own child," Face promised. The two men shook hands. "Thanks, B.A."

"No problem, Faceman. Man, this's gonna be the best birthday present Hannibal ever had." Chuckling to himself, B.A. climbed into the truck.

Hannibal's irritation had turned briefly to anger and was now heading towards concern for his lieutenant. "Where the hell is he?" he demanded. "He knows I've got to get to HQ tonight." e didn't want to go to the damned meeting in the first place, but he really didn't want to get there late. The brass would be debating new and exciting plans to get his men killed in particularly messy ways, and he needed to be there for it. Those who stayed at HQ didn't have a lot of use for real soldiers, who stayed in camp with their men and came to meetings driving broken-down, mud-splattered trucks, but even if they didn't really respect him they at least occasionally listened to him. But they wouldn't hold things up just because his driver had disappeared with the only truck the unit had at the moment that was even potentially capable of making the trip.

Murdock shrugged helplessly. "Don't know, Colonel. Nobody's seen him since the supply drop at noon." He hated being caught in the middle when Hannibal was pissed at Face.

"Where's B.A.?"

"Nobody's seen him either. It's like they disappeared."

Hannibal frowned. "Any snipers around?"

"None I know of, it's been real quiet all day."

Hannibal was beginning to think about ordering an all-out search for the two missing men when he heard the familiar rumble of the truck's engine in the distance. "Here he comes," he said, with more of a relieved sigh than he was willing to admit. "Hope B.A.'s with him."

"Maybe the truck broke down, so that's why he's so late," Murdock suggested. "It sure breaks down often enough."

"That would account for where B.A.'s been," the Colonel agreed. He pulled a pair of binoculars from under his cot and trained them down the

road, waiting for the truck to pull into view. What appeared made him drop his cigar. "I'll be damned." He ignored Murdock's curious demands and kept the binoculars focused on the approaching vehicles until they were close enough to see with the unaided eye.

The rest of the unit stared in silence as Face pulled up in front of the colonel's tent and set the handbrake. All attention was on the car, not the driver, and Face perused their gaping faces with a smug grin as they stared at the remarkable vehicle that glowed in the center of the jungle camp. Flaming scarlet paint, gleaming chrome, and white-walled tires that had never seen roads reflected the sun. The car sat with such quiet presence in the compound that it was the jungle which seemed vaguely out of place around it. Satisfied that the appropriate impact had been made, Face crossed to his C.O. and presented arms with a sharp salute. "Ready to go to HQ, sir?"

Hannibal ignored him and moved slowly to the car, admiring it from end to end. "Face, what's this?"

"It's a car, sir."

"No kidding," Hannibal drawled. "Where did it come from?"

Butter wouldn't have melted in the Face-man's mouth. "Sir, we'd been having so much trouble with the truck that you did suggest I acquire another vehicle for the unit."

Hannibal fixed his lieutenant with a steely glare. "And so this is what you 'acquired'?"

B.A., who had exited from the truck virtually unnoticed, couldn't restrain a grin. "You always say, if you're gonna do something, do it with style, Hannibal. If a '53 convertible Cadillac ain't style, I don't know what is."

Face couldn't keep a straight face any longer either. He tossed Hannibal the keys. "Happy birthday, Colonel."

Welcome to the Hotel California

by Nancy Lynn Wilson

The sun was bright; the day was hot. Mr. Duffield wandered around the park looking down at a piece of paper he held in his hand. The park bench he was instructed to wait near was occupied by a letter carrier eating his lunch. They smiled at each other. After standing around twenty minutes, Mr. Duffield sat down on the opposite side of the bench and glanced over at the man still eating his lunch. The mailman looked at him out of the corner of his eye.

"I hope my supervisor isn't doing a route inspection today," the mailman said.

Mr. Duffield just smiled and nodded his head. He thought this guy must have had one hell of a 60's decade, judging by his long hair and jewelry.

"Yep. My delivery route don't take eight hours so I come out here and enjoy the day," the mailman continued, without a trace of guilt in his voice.

Mr. Duffield looked at the man and said, "How do you know I'm not a Postal Inspector?"

"You?" the mailman said, looking up and sideways. "Well, you don't act like one. Besides, Postal Inspectors don't hang out at parks waiting for somebody. You *are* waiting for someone, aren't you?"

Mr. Duffield didn't say anything. The long haired mailman continued, "I see a lot in this park. You'd be surprised how much goes on during the day. Why just yesterday . . ."

"Look, I don't want to be rude, but it's carriers like you that give us a bad reputation. I carry mail over at the Main Post Office and I take pride in my work. I feel personally responsible to the people on my route and if we're not careful, privatization of the postal service is just around the corner. Remember the phone company? So I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't try to take advantage of the situation," Mr. Duffield sounded more than a little agitated. He tried to take his mind off the conversation by looking down at the piece of paper in his hand.

Suddenly, the voice next to him said, "Mr. Duffield? You have just found the A-Team. I'm John 'Hannibal' Smith." Mr. Duffield sat dumbfounded and watched as the "mailman" removed his hair and facial makeup. From behind some trees and shrubs came four other people. "This

here is Templeton Peck - or 'Face', 'Howling Mad' Murdock, B.A. Baracus and Amy Allen. I'm sorry for the elaborate setup, but we had to make sure you were who you said you were. Now, you told Mr. Lee that you haven't seen your son in a week. Is that right?"

"Why, yes, yes it is," Mr. Duffield said, looking around and still seeming somewhat confused by the events.

"Why don't you just go to the police?" Face said matter-of-factly.

"I have. They're trying but because he isn't a minor they really can't do much. They encourage us to wait and be positive. They say he might have just decided to 'find himself' and will return before Christmas," Mr. Duffield said.

"You also told Mr. Lee that your son isn't the only one to disappear. Who else is missing?" Amy asked.

"Well, there are two other boys who have disappeared under similar circumstances. We, my wife and I, know about them because we overheard the police talking. We decided to contact the families and ask about the circumstances by which they disappeared. We found out that each boy was last seen at a nightclub downtown. The name, I believe, is 'The Place Where Louis Dwells.' Here, I have pictures of my son, Troy, and also of the other two boys." Mr. Duffield handed some pictures to Hannibal. Hannibal looked at them and handed them to B.A. Each member of the Team looked at the pictures.

Amy was the only one to vocalize her thoughts. "Wow, these guys are really nice looking."

"Yeah. Troy is working his way through college on the money he makes from modeling. He doesn't want that for a career, though. He's studying pre-med and is going to be a doctor," Mr. Duffield spoke proudly of his son. "Only, I can't believe that he just left to 'find himself.' He doesn't have much of a social life because his studies take up most of his time. He doesn't have a girlfriend and he only has a handful of close friends."

"Why was he at the nightclub, then?" Face asked.

"I don't know why. I guess even my son needs a break every once in a while," was all Mr.

Duffield could think to say. Then, his head jerked up and he said, "The other families and I have taken a collection to pay you for finding our sons. It's three family's life savings. It should more than cover your expenses."

Hannibal looked at each member of the Team. Unless you were looking for it, you wouldn't have noticed their head movements. After a slight pause, Hannibal smiled and said, "It looks like you've just hired the A-Team, Mr. Duffield. Face will go over the numbers with you later. C'mon, let's go."

* * * * *

"Amy, I want you to check out the nightclub. See who owns it and what type of clientele they pull in." Hannibal reached his hand over his shoulder and said, "Face?"

"Ah, right Hannibal," Face said handing Hannibal a cigar.

"Murdock, go with Amy. Dig up any school records on those boys," Hannibal said while lighting his cigar.

Amy smiled and reached over towards Murdock as if she might tap his hand to show her approval. He pulled his hand away and said, "Do you know how much a 'Hand' model makes? They make great money if they can get their hands insured. B.A., drop us off up here on the corner. There's an insurance company there and I want to check on what it will cost to have these babies insured."

"Shut up, foo! Hannibal, I can't take him waiving those hands of his in my face. If he don't stop, I'll break 'em and then he won't never get those suckas insured!" B.A. growled.

B.A. kept driving the van and didn't stop at the corner, much to Murdock's disgust and Amy's amusement.

Changing the subject, Hannibal said, "It would really be nice if we had a man on the inside. Someone who might be just the kind of guy someone else would want." Slowly, Murdock, Amy and Hannibal looked around at Face.

"Ah, you've got to be kidding! Don't you think I'm a little old to be this kind of bait?" Face objected.

"Perhaps, but it's worth a try. If it doesn't work, then we'll go to plan B." Hannibal smiled, knowing full well that he hadn't thought of plan B and knew that they knew that too. "B.A., can you make a small homing device? I mean, a *very* small homing device?"

"What for?" Face asked, very concerned.

"Sure," B.A. said with a smile.

"Good. We'll meet outside the nightclub tonight at 10 p.m.," Hannibal said.

"Wait a minute. What are you going to do with a *very* small homing device?" Face asked again.

When no one answered him, he began to protest. "I don't want to swallow another electronic gizmo. The last time you made me swallow one I had one heck of a time digesting it. I'm not doing it again." Face was determined.

"Don't worry, Face. You won't have to swallow it. I have an idea," Hannibal smiled. With that, B.A. pulled the van over to the curb and let Amy and Murdock out in front of the newspaper office. He drove off and a few minutes later, he let Hannibal out at a pay phone. He then dropped Face off at his scammed penthouse suite in one of the major hotels and returned for Hannibal. Hannibal asked, "Where'd you leave Face?"

"At his place, looking for something to wear tonight," B.A. said.

"Good. The good doctor is going to meet us there at six." Hannibal smiled as they drove off to make the electronic homing device.

* * * * *

The door chimes in the 2300 square-foot suite rang, but Face wasn't in any mood to answer them. He wasn't expecting anyone and he still had to eat dinner and decide what he was going to wear to parade around a college hangout. It was a Saturday night, too, and he had to break his date with Kim Yu. She was undoubtedly the most beautiful Amer-Asian girl he had ever met. But whoever it was, they weren't going away, so he put on a silk smoking jacket and walked over to the door. "Who is it?" he said.

"Face, it's us. Open up," Hannibal replied.

Face unlocked the door and opened it to find B.A. and Hannibal standing there, smiling. "What are you doing here? I thought I was suppose to meet you tonight," Face said.

From beside Hannibal stepped Maggie Sullivan. Face grimaced. He knew she wouldn't be there unless Hannibal was up to something he knew he wouldn't like. B.A. pushed through the doorway, followed by Maggie and then Hannibal. Without speaking to Face, B.A. pulled the tiny electronic device from his pocket and gave it to Hannibal. "Here's the bug."

Face began to babble. "Hey, wait a minute. What's going on? Hannibal, I really don't like this." Face started to back away from the doctor, who was now holding the device. B.A. moved in next to Face and Hannibal moved in on his other side. They each gently took an arm and led Face into the bedroom.

"Relax, Face. I asked the doctor here to perform very minor surgery so that we can keep track

of you if they take the 'bait.' You said yourself that you didn't want to swallow anything. I'm only respecting your wishes," Hannibal said.

Face managed to gently wriggle free and back slowly away from his friends. B.A. was blocking the door and Maggie was standing just inside, holding a syringe. B.A. giggled and looked at the syringe and said, "It sure feels good not being on the receiving end of that for once."

Face realized there was no escape, there was no talking his way out, and, more importantly, there was no denying what was about to happen. With his back literally against the wall, he put his hands up and pleadingly said, "Wait a minute, guys. You just can't come in here and perform surgery!"

Hannibal removed his cigar and began, "Face, we need some way of keeping track of you. Think about it. If you get nabbed, it's a lot quicker tracking a homing device than it is tracking down the people who may have kidnapped you. I suspect, if we are dealing with a form of slavery, you'll be stripped of your clothes and issued new ones. Maggie here is going to implant the device into the back of your neck. There will be a very slight scar but nothing to worry about." Hannibal looked at the doctor and said, "Tell him what you're going to do."

"First I'm going to give you a general anesthetic so that you are relaxed. It is very mild so you will be awake, just not very aware. Then, I'll give you a local anesthetic at the site of the incision. The incision will be less than one-eighth of an inch. I'll insert the device just under the skin. I won't use stitches but instead I'll use a butterfly bandage. It should heal relatively quickly and nobody should notice it. You will probably be sore at the point of the incision, but only for a day and you can take regular pain killers for that. If, by good fortune nobody kidnaps you, I will remove the device and you'll be no worse for wear." She could tell he wasn't thrilled about the idea.

Face sat down and began thinking that this job was going to cost these families big bucks. Life savings or no, he was going to get paid for this one. "How will I feel tonight?" he asked.

"Fine. I'll give you a couple of pain killers and you won't feel a thing," Maggie said.

Everyone was silent while they gave their friend time to think about it. Finally, Face said, "What the heck. It's not like I'm dying. It's just a small implant which will probably never be needed because I don't exactly fit the description of those young men and I doubt I'll be snatched."

They went to work immediately. The doctor gave Face a mild sedative and while he was relaxing, she went and retrieved her doctor's bag with the necessary instruments to perform the op-

eration. As expected, the operation went smoothly and Face was returning to normal within the hour. The doctor stayed with Face while the others went to bring back something to eat.

"How are you feeling?" Hannibal asked.

"Fine. I guess. My neck is sore, though," Face said while rubbing it.

"We brought you back something to eat. Here, have a hamburger," Hannibal tossed a burger towards Face.

"Ugh. No thanks. I'm not especially hungry." Face tried to stand up and walk but felt a little light-headed.

"That's the effect of the anesthesia. It should wear off completely within the hour. You may or may not get your appetite back tonight. I wouldn't push eating if you don't want to," Maggie said.

The next couple of hours passed slowly. The doctor kept checking Face, and B.A. made sure the tracking device worked. By 9 p.m., Face was back to normal and feeling pretty good. He even went so far as to thank Maggie for doing such a nice job. His neck was still sore but nothing he couldn't live with. He didn't even seem to worry too much about what he would wear. He put on some casual clothes and called it good. He was fairly confident that nothing would happen to him and maybe, just maybe, he'd meet a beautiful young graduate student who preferred slightly older men.

At nine-thirty, Hannibal said good-bye to Maggie and went to the van where B.A. and Face were already waiting for him. They drove around the club's parking lot until they saw Amy's car and parked nearby. Amy and Murdock hopped into the van and started relaying the information they had learned.

Amy spoke first. "The club is owned by a Pakistani by the name of Faisal. He bought it six months ago. He doesn't own anything else except for this place. He has no family, no business partners and no outstanding police or government records. He's only been in this country for a year and seems to keep to himself. He lives in the space above the club. The people who usually frequent his place are undergraduate and graduate students from the nearby colleges and universities. A few professors and some school administrators also come in."

Murdock continued, "There doesn't appear to be a pattern among the boys who have disappeared. They were all college students but they went to different schools and had different majors: pre-med, physical education, and communications. Two had girlfriends but they weren't with the guys the night they disap-

peared. They went missing after their first visit to the nightclub. None of them had any enemies to speak of, none had questionable associations, and none were 'Hand' models."

"Thanks," Hannibal said. He turned and looked at Face and asked, "You ready?"

"Ready as I'll ever be," replied Face.

The door to the van opened and Face stepped out. He straightened his clothes but before he walked away, he said, "If you see me walk out with a beautiful young blonde, don't follow me."

* * * * *

The place was dark and smelled of smoke. The music was loud and Face began remembering his days of frequenting nightclubs. He'd been to some of the best in the country; mostly by invitation and on the arm of a gorgeous woman. He felt very comfortable and he began to survey the place. It had the usual bar, dance floor and tables. It looked as though it could house live entertainment if that was the direction the owner chose to go. The decor was more or less stylish for the time and he noticed the employees were mostly college students. Nothing unusual. He resigned himself to the idea that this was going to be a long night and since his neck was still slightly sore, he sat at the bar and ordered a drink. The hours passed uneventfully. He danced a few dances and at midnight, he went to the pay phone to report.

* * * * *

The night had been long for everyone, except Hannibal, who never seemed to mind the waiting. Murdock spent most of the time manicuring and caring for his hands, determined that he was going to become a "Hand" model.

"Murdock, you're a pilot," Amy stated. "Do you think you will be able to get insurance if they know you fly around in anything resembling an aircraft?"

"Of course. They simply don't have to know what I do in my spare time," Murdock defended his idea.

"You're a mental patient, foo! They won't give you insurance because you're crazy!" B.A. growled.

"Like I said," Murdock said indignantly, "they don't need to know how I pass my free time. Just that I do. And these babies are going to make a lot of money." Murdock was holding them up and admiring them.

"Aah, Murdock? What is this on your palm?" Hannibal asked.

"That's a scar. I got that when my chopper

didn't follow the usual landing procedure," Murdock explained.

"You mean you crashed?" Amy asked.

"You say 'toe-maa-toe', I say 'toe-mah-toe'," Murdock responded.

The van phone rang and Hannibal picked it up, saying, "Joe's Deli."

"Colonel, everything's fine here. Nothing unusual. Just checking in," Face said.

"Good, stay with it," Hannibal said and hung up the phone. "It looks like it's going to be a long night. We'll work in shifts. B.A., you watch the receiver while Murdock keeps an eye on the bar for any unusual activity. Amy, you and I will rest in the back. We'll switch in a couple of hours." They changed places and got comfortable for the long wait ahead.

* * * * *

Face had a few more drinks and danced a few more dances but, in all the time he spent there, he didn't see anything he wanted to pursue. He was tired and not accustomed to staying up all hours of the night in a club. He drifted into the men's room and noticed no one was there. He used the facilities, washed his hands and was turning to leave when someone came from out of nowhere and slammed a white cloth over his nose and mouth. Within seconds, he was unconscious.

* * * * *

Amy couldn't believe her eyes. The needle, which had been stationary all night, was now moving. At first she thought it was eye fatigue and she rubbed her eyes. When she realized this was the real thing, she reached over and grabbed Hannibal's arm. "Hannibal, the needle is moving!"

The other two were up in a flash and the four sat and watched the needle shift positions. "Move over! I'm driving!" B.A. stated.

They followed the needle and realized they were keeping close to a black sedan. The car drove thirty miles through the city. It then left the city and drove east for another fifty miles into a secluded villa. A half mile away, B.A. parked the van. Hannibal peered through his night vision binoculars and reported that Face had not left the car, but several people had looked inside it. Then, the driver got back in, turned around and drove away. They followed the car back into the city and to the airport. The car stopped at a section of the airport where private jets take off and land. B.A. slowly pulled the van up behind one of the hangers and out of sight.

"What could they be doing?" Amy asked.

They watched several men gather on the tarmac.

Hannibal said to Murdock, "We need a plane." Hannibal was already out of the van and into the back compartment. Earlier that day, while B.A. was making the homing device, Hannibal had been packing 'mission' bags for everyone. He gave each a bag.

"I ain't ridin' in no plane, Hannibal," B.A. said.

Ignoring B.A., Hannibal turned to Murdock and repeated, "We need a plane, Murdock. Any suggestions?"

"That's usually Face's department but I'll see what I can do," Murdock reeled around and started to walk away.

"Wait!" Amy said. "I have a friend who owns a plane and he keeps it here. He works at the paper and he's taken me up a few times." Murdock reeled back around with a smile.

"I told you guys, I ain't going up in no plane. Face or no Face, I can meet you all wherever your going," B.A.'s speech became slightly slurred.

Amy looked quizzically at B.A. and then back to Hannibal. "It's a small plane, I'm not sure if we'll all fit."

B.A. began to stagger while Murdock, Amy and Hannibal watched. Finally, he crumbled into a heap of gold on the tarmac. Murdock and Amy were impressed. "How'd you do that, Hannibal?" Amy asked.

"I had the good doctor fashion a small tine syringe to the handle of his bag. When he grabbed it, the sedative went into his hand. It takes a little longer, but it's effective. The dose was very small, so we'll have to give him another shot when we're airborne. Now, where is that plane your friend has?" Hannibal asked.

They found the plane and loaded it up with their supplies. Amy kept a lookout for the men in the car and the exact whereabouts of Face. Hannibal and Murdock moved the plane onto the runway and took note that it was indeed a very small plane. Amy reported that the men carried Face out of the car and into their plane. He was unconscious. They pulled B.A. into the back seat and Amy crawled in beside him. Between B.A. and the gear, she had little room to move. She hoped they wouldn't be flying too far. Murdock started the engines and radioed the tower for permission to take off. Hannibal held the receiver. "Let's go, Murdock," was all Hannibal said.

* * * * *

Hannibal had hoped they would fly east so they

would be flying into sunlight. But they flew west so he relied on the plane's radar as well as the receiver to keep track of Face. Amy had given B.A. another dose of the sedative and then she sat back and wondered when her friend would realize his plane was missing and if she should tell him she took it. She didn't really like the guy so she decided she wouldn't tell him. She started thinking about the events of the previous day and how much fun she had had with Murdock. She smiled and dozed off to sleep.

"Hannibal! Do you see that?" Murdock said, wide-eyed. It was dawn and he could just barely make out a parachute. And it looked as though two people were sharing it.

Hannibal looked out the plane and nodded. "Amy?"

"Yeah?" Amy blinked.

"Can you reach behind you in that cargo bay and see if this fellow carried a parachute?" Hannibal asked.

She found a parachute and gave it to Hannibal. He struggled to get it on. Once it was on, he left instructions for them to land at the nearest airport. Hannibal had placed a small beacon in his bag and Murdock had the receiver in his bag. They were to follow that beacon while Hannibal was going to follow Face. "Get to me as soon as you can." With that, he opened the door and bailed out.

Amy was aghast. She looked out the window to catch a glimpse of Hannibal free falling. "Won't they see him open his chute?"

"Nah, he'll wait until the last possible minute and let go," Murdock said confidently.

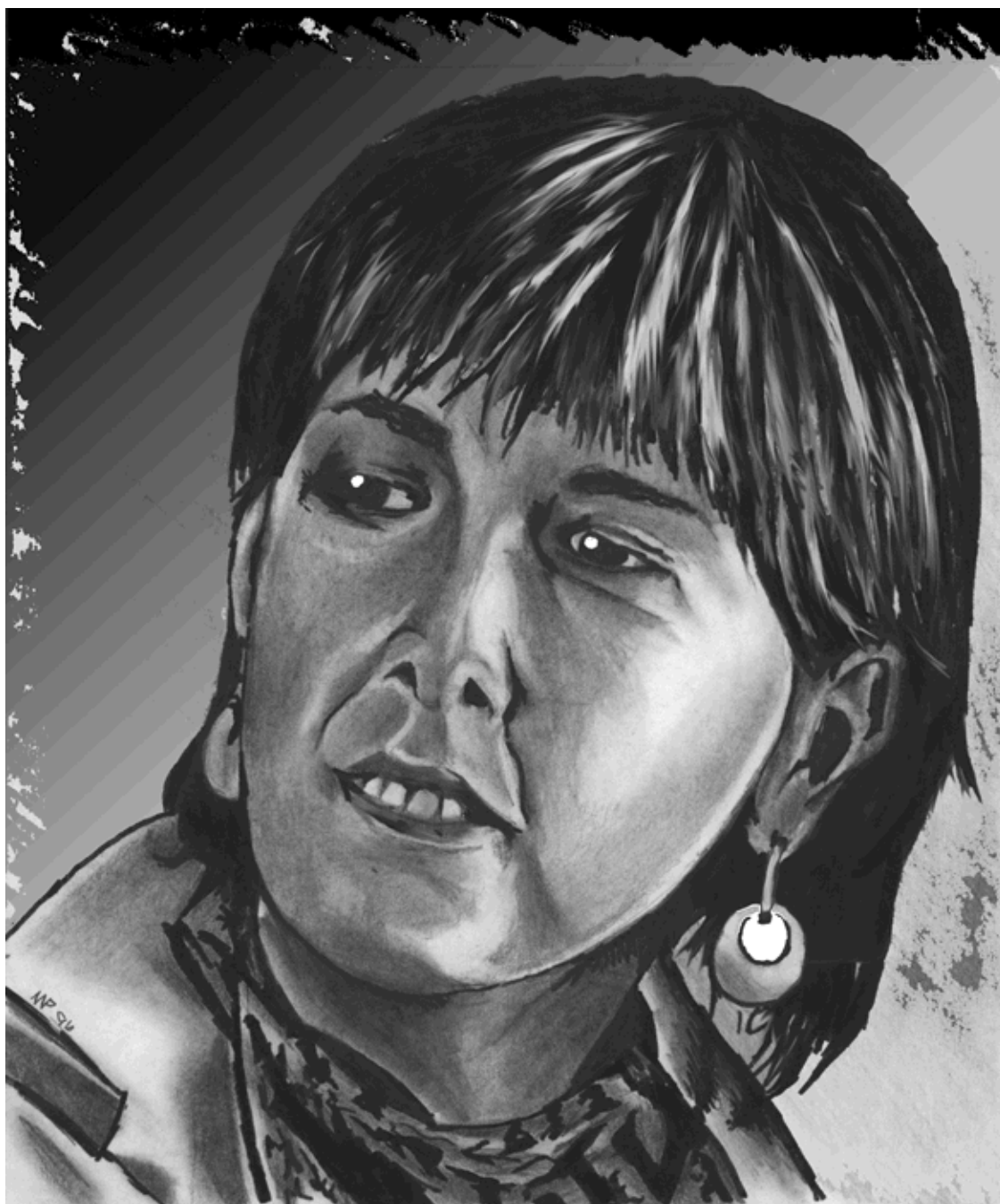
* * * * *

Murdock called in a distress call and landed at an airport that was about ten miles west of Hannibal's jump site. He pulled B.A. out and shouted to the mechanic that he needed a car to get the man to the hospital. The mechanic didn't seem to care about the condition of B.A. but after some haggling, Amy and Murdock were able to drag B.A. into the backseat of an old Buick the mechanic had fixed up. They left the plane as collateral and the man seemed satisfied with that. Amy reached into Murdock's bag and found the receiver. She turned it on and the beeping began. "Hannibal thinks of everything," she mused.

"He has to. Our lives might depend on it someday," Murdock said as they drove away from the airport.

"Do you think Face is okay?" she asked.

"Yeah. They want him alive, otherwise they would have done something to him by now," Murdock said.



"Do you worry about Face?" Amy asked.

"Nope. He can take care of himself. Besides, we'll be there when he needs us." Then Murdock asked, "Do you worry about him?" He wasn't sure he wanted to hear the answer.

"Nope," was all she said.

"Do you worry about anyone?" Murdock asked.

"Yes," was all she said. Inwardly, they both smiled. The conversation would have continued except B.A. started to moan.

"We're gonna have one angry mudsucka on our hands in a minute," Murdock said. "Brace yourself. This isn't going to be pretty."

"WHERE AM I?!" B.A. roared. He looked around and knew he wasn't in L.A. "I don't remember getting here! Where are we, foo'?"

"B.A., we're following Faceman. They threw him out of a plane over this island and Hannibal bailed out to follow him. We landed at a strip ten miles from Hannibal and now we're trying to track down Hannibal, who is tracking down Faceman," Murdock said. Amy held her breath hoping B.A. wouldn't leap over the seat and start strangling Murdock.

B.A. said nothing. He was thinking about Face and how he probably was in trouble and needed the Team. He didn't like having to fly but the guys made it easy on him and as long as he was unconscious, he didn't mind too much. At least that is what he thought to himself; he would never tell the guys that.

Murdock and Amy looked at each other when there was no response from B.A. They decided not to push their luck and drove the rest of the way in silence.

* * * * *

Hannibal had landed in rough terrain. His feet were wet and it was going to be a hot day. He stashed his parachute and opened his bag. He immediately began to walk in the direction of the needle. He walked about four miles before he came to an encampment. He sized up the place but decided to wait for the rest of the Team before he made any moves. He hollowed out some underbrush and made a hole so that he could climb into it undetected. If there were perimeter guards, they wouldn't see him under the plant growth. He relaxed and waited for the others to join him.

"Hannibal?" Murdock whispered.

"Over here," Hannibal responded.

Murdock, B.A. and Amy inched their way towards the hole that Hannibal had made. They all crouched low so the thick undergrowth of plants hid them as well as muffled their

voices.

"Have you seen Face?" Amy asked.

"No. But this is where they came." They huddled around while Hannibal gave orders. "B.A., take the south side. Murdock, take the north side. Amy, stay here. If any guards come this way, slip into that hole and don't move.

Within the hour, they rendezvoused again. B.A. gave his report: "There are barracks which house around twenty men, they sleep next to the ammo depot. Fairly robust collection of arms, but mostly hand weapons. Only three guards covering the south side, most of the encampment ends at the ocean where there are cliffs."

Murdock chimed in, "The north side is dense with vegetation. Very difficult to maneuver. There are six guards: two in towers and four on foot. They have a landing pad for helicopters. There is a large heavily guarded building in the center of the compound where it appears entrance is limited to VIP's."

"Did you see Face?" Amy asked again.

They shook their heads no and she looked around. Hannibal said, "He'll be okay."

A lot of commotion began and they stopped and watched. They saw four men walking towards the heavily guarded building in the center of the compound. Immediately, they recognized Face, his hands and legs shackled together. He looked all right, if somewhat dazed.

Hannibal smiled, "Well guys, we've found our man."

* * * * *

The smell of ammonia under his nose was haltingly strong. He heard a voice saying he was coming around. More than anything, Face wanted to sleep. The strong smell hit his head again and he jerked. Looking up, he saw a man bending towards him. The figure was blurry and Face kept blinking trying to focus.

"How are you feeling?" another heavily accented voice said.

"Not very well," Face murmured.

The two men started talking softly and Face tried get his bearings. After a few minutes, he began to remember. He remembered the nightclub and dancing. He remembered having a few drinks and his neck aching. He remembered the restroom and . . . and, yes, he remembered being chloroformed. He thought grudgingly to himself, "*Terrific, they took the 'bait'.*" He didn't know how long it had been since he had eaten but his stomach hurt. The drug had taken its toll and he felt nauseous on top of it all.

Face was trying to acclimate himself to his new surroundings when one of the men said, "Get

up."

Face was pulled to a standing position, realizing for the first time that his hands and legs were shackled and he was in all new clothes. "Ah, you mind telling me who you are?" Face asked with a forced smile.

"All in due time," the other voice said.

They left the dark room and walked out into the bright sunlight. Face squinted and held his arms up to shield himself from the sun. He was shoved forward by a guard holding an automatic weapon. They walked towards a large building. Face began taking mental notes: guards, towers, ammunition, distances, letters, layout. An aching neck prevented him from fully concentrating and he raised his hands up to rub it. While walking and gently rubbing his neck he remembered why it was sore. Then he slowly smiled because he knew the Team was out there.

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They watched Face and the men disappear into the building. Hannibal motioned to the Team and they quietly moved away from the compound. When Hannibal thought they were far enough away, he said, "We have to find out who is behind all this and what they want with these people."

"What's the plan, Colonel?" Murdock asked.

"Tonight, we'll investigate further and get a feel for the layout. I have a feeling that what we need to know is in the building Face and those men came out of. I want us to split up and get some sleep. B.A., you find a spot on the south side. Murdock, you go to the north side and bed down. Amy, you and I will stay in the hole I made. We'll meet again before sundown."

* * * * *

Face tried to adjust his eyes again to the sudden darkness of the building. As they walked down the center corridor, he started making out what appeared to be prison cells. Each one was occupied with a single person. They stopped in front of a cell and the guard pushed Face inside. The door slammed shut and everyone left. Face looked around and saw a toilet, a sink and a mattress lying on the floor. He thought the least they could have done was remove his shackles but he was too tired to yell after them and, besides, they had already left the building. He went to the bars and looked across the corridor into the other cell. A young guy was standing there, looking back at him.

"Welcome to the Hotel California," the

young guy said.

"Hotel California?" Face questioned.

"Yeah, you can check in any time you want, but you can never leave." Realizing Face either wasn't getting it or still trying to recover from the drug, he continued, "It's a song by the Eagles. You have heard of the Eagles? They're a group from the 70's." The boys eyebrows raised.

Face looked around and noticed several more faces peering through the bars of the other cells and said, "Yeah, I've heard of them. Does anyone know where we are?"

"Nope," came a voice from across the corridor and down one cell. "We've all been kidnapped from different places and brought here. Nobody knows why, though. They don't make us do anything. They feed us well and we get exercise but they won't tell us what they want."

"How long have you been here?" Face asked.

He heard answers from all directions: "Fifteen days;" "Five days;" "Two weeks;" "Five days;" "Almost a week."

"How many of us are there?" Face continued.

"You make the seventh," said the guy across from his cell. "Let me introduce myself. My name is Troy. Next to you are David, Hunter, and Scott. Next to me are Max and Fred."

Face took it all in and said, "Well, believe it or not, Troy, you're father hired us to find you."

"Hired you?" Troy looked excited.

"Yes. I'm Templeton Peck, better known as Face, of the A-Team," Face said, looking around while rubbing his neck.

"It doesn't look like you're doing such a great job getting us outta here," a voice from down the corridor said.

"That's Fred," Troy said with disgust. "He's kind of a jerk."

Face spoke loud enough so that he could be heard but soft enough so that the guards outside couldn't. "Well, I'm not alone. My friends will be along any time so we have to be on the alert for an opportunity. You'll know it when it happens. In the meantime, I'm going to lie down, I don't feel well. When do we get fed around here?" Face said while slowly lying down on the mattress.

"We just ate lunch," Troy answered.

"Terrific," Face said sarcastically.

* * * * *

Hannibal, Amy, Murdock and B.A. met again at sundown. Murdock had already smeared black mud all over his face and was wearing a black beanie hat. His hands were in gloves to protect them from damage.

"Where did you get all that stuff?" Amy

asked.

"In the bag Hannibal packed," Murdock said looking at his gloved hands. "I want to thank you, Colonel, for considering the delicate state of my hands in this case and packing some gloves for me."

Hannibal smiled, put his hand on Murdock's shoulder and said, "Just remember me when you make your millions."

"Yes sir, Colonel," Murdock said as Hannibal began to draw the layout of the encampment in the dirt.

"Okay. Murdock, you and I will check out that building." Hannibal made an X on the commander's quarters. "B.A., try to see inside the building that Face is now in. Amy, you stand guard. If you hear anything, whistle like a quail. Let's go." Amy started wondering what kind of sound a quail makes. Before she had a chance to ask, they were gone.

Hannibal and Murdock waited several hours until the lights went out in the building and the man in charge left. Then they darted from tree to tree, getting closer and closer. They kept to the shadows and were thankful the moon was behind clouds. At the door, Hannibal distracted the guard by throwing a rock. While the guard was investigating the sound, Murdock jimmied the lock and they went inside. Standing motionless in front of a safe, they turned and looked at each other knowing that this was Face's area and neither one of them was sure he could unlock it. It was a very old model and one that Face had never liked to open because there was no challenge to it. Murdock had remembered that because several years back, Face had tried to teach Murdock how to open a safe and used one similar to this one. Murdock gave it his best shot.

"C'mon, Murdock," Hannibal said impatiently.

After what seemed like an eternity, Hannibal heard a click and the safe was open. "Nice," Hannibal said.

Inside the safe they found exactly what they were looking for. Hannibal stashed the piece of paper into his shirt, shut the safe and motioned Murdock to the front door. Hannibal distracted the guard again by making a sound inside the building. When the guard came in to investigate, Murdock and Hannibal slipped out and made their way back to the meeting point.

B.A. and Amy were already there when they arrived. B.A. said, "Hannibal, I couldn't see anything. There are no windows in that building."

Hannibal pulled the piece of paper from his shirt and said, "I think I've found a way into this place. It appears that they are selling people to

anyone who is rich enough and can afford them. From the papers in the safe, and the list I have here, they bring very wealthy clients in one at a time and conduct a silent auction. Face won't be in any danger unless someone bids on him." Hannibal smiled and looked at Amy. "Amy? How would you like to be the Princess of Sri Banah?"

* * * * *

Face was feeling a lot better after he'd slept and eaten breakfast. He walked around his cell, trying to get a little exercise, when he heard the door open and in walked ten guards. They took everyone outside and marched them down a narrow path to an opening surrounded by rocks. Once in the opening, they removed the shackles and allowed the prisoners to walk around. Face had a chance to look at the other guys. There was an assortment of men: young, gruff, husky, good looking. He couldn't find anything that might group them together except they were all prisoners for some reason. He looked around and noticed the area was the size of a volleyball court and there was a makeshift basketball court at one end. They started a game of basketball. Face thought, *wouldn't it have been nice if the POW camps in Nam were as friendly*, but he remembered he was still a prisoner and had to be thinking of ways to escape. He just hoped Hannibal was nearby when it went down.

After an hour, they were returned to their cells. They each were given an opportunity to shower and shave and were given new clothes. Something was about to happen but nobody knew what. The commander came in and checked each one of the guys individually for appearance. He especially liked Face and took his time looking him over. Face felt uneasy and with good reason. The commander's hands moved around his waist and up his back, then over his shoulders and down his arms. Face tensed and stepped away from the commander's hands. The guards came over in a flash and pointed their guns at him. Face froze. The commander looked at Face and said, "You are a very lucky man." His accent was heavy. "Fortunately for you, there is a market in my country for men like you."

Face knew the market the commander referred to and thoughts of Nam crept into his head. He tried to suppress those images. He had suppressed the images since they escaped from that POW camp and now he felt he was reliving it again. He shook his head to try and block the memory. He knew Hannibal had to do something and, whatever it was, it had to be done soon.

By late morning, the guards ordered everyone outside. They were shackled on the hands

and legs and they moved slowly into the courtyard. A large wooden platform had been brought in and the prisoners were lined up on it. In front of the platform were chairs. They were empty. The guards arranged the prisoners according to the commander's instructions. After an hour, the prisoners were escorted back to their cells. Face lay on his mattress, beginning to question why he hadn't seen Hannibal. He shut his eyes at the thought of the Team not being around.

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B.A. had witnessed the march of the prisoners out of the camp and their return. He watched the workmen build what appeared to be a stage and put chairs in front. The area was being readied for the auction. Hannibal, Amy and Murdock had driven back to a small town Murdock remembered passing through and managed to find a store where Amy could clean up and buy clothes that would help her look the part of a Middle Eastern Princess. Murdock had purchased clothes for B.A. and himself so they could look the part of body guards, and Hannibal had bought clothes so he could appear to be her escort. Amy asked, "Do you think this will work? I don't exactly look like a Middle Easterner."

"If they ask, your mother was American and you favor her side of the family," Hannibal stated.

They met B.A. at the meeting point and he relayed what he had seen. "Okay, here's the plan," Hannibal began. "According to the list, the first party is due to arrive at 1 p.m. Then a party arrives every hour on the hour until five o'clock. This process repeats itself tomorrow. Princess Samena is the last to arrive tomorrow. We should have no trouble intercepting her car. In the meantime, I suggest we watch and get a feel for their clientele."

They moved into a position where they could hear and see the stage and settled into the vegetation so they wouldn't be noticed. At 12:45 p.m., the commotion began. A limousine drove up and let out two men followed by a tall slender woman dressed in a white suit, white high heels, white gloves, white sunglasses and a white hat. She held a white purse. She was beautiful. She was escorted to one of the chairs while her body guards stood behind her, one holding a briefcase, and one scanning the place. The prisoners were escorted out and lined up on the stage. The woman caught a glimpse of Face and smiled. Face looked at her and smiled. *This is more like it*, Face thought. The idea of being with her was far more appealing than the idea of being with the commander.

The commander walked out onto the platform and began the first of what would be five speeches. "As you can see, we have any type of man you may want. We have youth and experience, laborers and lovers. We have war veterans and college graduates. If you don't see someone here who meets your desires, I can get him. But I assure you, someone in the group can most probably satisfy your every need. You may talk to anyone, but you may not touch." He spoke a little while longer and then he motioned to the woman to come up to the stage and inspect each man individually.

The woman stood up and walked over to the platform. Looking up, she sized up each and every man. Face now realized what was going on: he was being sold, probably to the highest bidder. He figured the guy with the briefcase was carrying the cash; he could be sold as a lover or a worker; and he could be sold to a woman or a man. The thought of being sold to a man for purposes other than labor was disturbing. Of course, being sold as labor had its down side as well, he thought. When the woman got to Face, she asked him his name. He told her. She asked him what he specialized in. With eyes sparkling, he said, "Evading the military police." The commander narrowed his eyes in anger and she was ready to ask another question when the commander interrupted and urged her on. She looked over her sunglasses to get a better look at Face, then she reluctantly walked on to the next prisoner.

Hannibal smiled and said, "Well, at least we don't have to worry about someone bidding on him."

This procedure occurred four more times. Each time a different person sat in the "bidder's" chair. One older middle eastern man seemed particularly interested in Troy. Face could feel his anger mount when he thought about what the man would do with the boy. Several more men appeared with similar interests, some very interested in Face and some very interested in Troy. Nobody was sure of how the prisoners were going to be utilized by their respective buyers, but it was evident to Face that almost everyone who came was interested in a partner. Troy and Face seemed to be the ones attracting the most attention. Face only hoped that the lady in white was as rich in cash as she was in looks.

The so called "guests" had all gone and the prisoners were still standing on the platform. Face felt uneasy and glanced at the commander, who was staring at him. The smile on the commander's face told all and Face felt sickened. He looked around to see if he could see the Team. The commander noticed and sent a guard over. Before Face could react, he had the butt of a

semi-automatic jammed into this stomach. Face doubled over and just as the guard was about to come down on his back, the commander waived the guard away. Face looked up, gasping for air. The commander glared at Face and motioned for the prisoners to be led back to their cells.

"Hannibal? Did you see that commander? He has total contempt for Face. What do you suppose Face did?" Amy whispered.

"Probably nothing," Hannibal said. The concern in his voice was masked well; Amy didn't sense anything wrong but B.A. and Murdock knew better. Not wanting to say anything in front of Amy, Murdock waited until they had eaten and Amy had decided to retire for the night before he asked, "Do you think we should attack tonight? Face seemed to be worried about something, otherwise he never would have looked around for us."

"Yeah," B.A. agreed. "Do you think that commander is going to do something to him?"

Hannibal sighed and remained silent. He didn't know why Face had looked around but he had an idea. Since the bidding began the number of guards had tripled and they were outnumbered twenty to one. Hannibal assumed it was to guard the excess amount of cash being stored there. They wouldn't be doing Face any good if they showed up dead. "No, we'll keep to plan. Face knows the risks; he'll be okay," Hannibal said, looking back at the prison building.

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Face opened his eyes to the barrel of an automatic gun. Two guards hovered over him, speaking very softly. One of them whispered, "The commander wants to see you." Face's stomach sank. His mind began reeling with thoughts of how he might get out of this one.

"Terrific. Just when I thought I was going to get a good night's sleep..."

Face was cut off by a guard saying, "Shut up!"

It was pitch black outside as they escorted Face to the commander's quarters. Once inside, the guards turned and left Face standing in the middle of the room. The commander came around the corner with a glass of whiskey. He looked at Face and smiled. "You seem tense. Weren't you sleeping well?" his speech was slurred. Face said nothing. "Here, have a drink. I'd like to get to know you better. I know your complete history, from the orphanage until now." He paused and then his voice lowered and he said, "And I know you were looking for your friends today." Face could feel the color slip from his face. He tried not to show his anxiety by looking around the

room and sizing it up.

The commander continued, "I wouldn't rely on getting any help from the A-Team," he said while handing Face a glass of whiskey. After another long pause, he went on, "But, back to you... and me." He was now smiling and began to slowly walk around behind Face. Face didn't move. The commander pulled Face's shirt tail from his pants and Face could feel his hands against his skin. He closed his eyes, praying that something would come into his head or the Team would come flying into the room with guns firing. The commander unbuckled Face's pants and started to slide downwards when Face jerked away and reeled around.

Angered by this second rejection, the commander grabbed a two foot long swatch of corded rawhide and struck it across Face's cheek. The whelp formed immediately and his eyes filled with water from the pain. Face shook his head and tried to brace himself for another advancement when the commander stopped and fell against a table. He was evidently feeling the effects of the whiskey. He shook his head and then wobbled to the wall and pressed a button. Within seconds, guards arrived. "Take him away and put him with the others." The guards pulled Face up and half carried him off.

His hands and legs were still shackled which made it hard to keep up with the guards. He fell into one of the guards and ended up getting kicked and punched for his clumsiness. When they entered the building, instead of taking him down the corridor to his cell, they turned and walked through a door and down some stairs. The hall was lit only by a single bulb. He could see enough to know that downstairs wasn't anything like upstairs and he really didn't want to be down there. The guards unlocked a small metal door and shoved Face in. He fell face first onto the cold concrete floor. He turned his head and tried to focus on the figure sitting across the room.

"Hi. I told you we'd follow you," Face heard Hannibal's smiling voice say.

Face looked around and saw Hannibal, B.A., Murdock and Amy. B.A. and Murdock were advancing forward to help him up. "Hannibal, it took you long enough. What was the point to the implant if you weren't going to rescue us right away?" Face said while trying to position the chains so he could stand up.

"Hey, Faceman. Are you all right?" Murdock asked excitedly when he saw the whelp on his face.

"Only until that commander sobers up," Face said. Then they noticed his pants being unbuckled and his shirttail hanging out.

Amy's eyes widened and she said, "Face, what did he do to you?" She started to walk over to him but her instincts told her to stay back. Face didn't answer her question but he made his way over to the mattress and fell onto it. The shackles were frustrating him by now and he swore at them and pulled at them. After wearing them all day, he was tired of the extra weight and inconvenience. The Team remained quiet and allowed Face to vent some frustration. Face calmed down and after a few minutes of silence, he moaned "How'd they catch you?"

Murdock answered, "It's a long story; suffice it to say that someone in town tipped them off. They nabbed us one at a time as we split up to get some sleep."

After several minutes, Face sighed and said, "B.A.?"

B.A. was startled. "Yeah?" he answered softly.

"I have something for you. But it hurts too much to reach it." Face stretched out his leg. "It's in the cuff of these pants."

B.A. went over to Face and gingerly felt inside the cuff. He pulled out a set of keys. "Hey man, where'd you get these keys?" B.A. said with a smile.

"When you're desperate, you can even manage to pick pocket someone while wearing shackles," Face smiled.

Hannibal smiled and said, "Nice. See if they work."

They worked like a charm. B.A. opened the door and then unlocked the chains holding Face. They surveyed the basement. The only guards on duty were outside the building, standing by the door. There were no windows but there was a vent of some kind. They squeezed through the vent and it opened at the rear of the building. They scurried towards the perimeter, keeping low and out of sight until they were far enough away that they could talk without being noticed.

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"I have an idea," Hannibal began. He spelled out the overall plan and a few minutes later, the Team dispersed on their respective missions.

Murdock, Amy and Face raided the ammo depot. They took as many small caliber weapons and grenades as they could fit in their bags. Then they crawled back into the prison building using the vent as their door. They walked upstairs and managed to wake everyone up and give each a small handgun. Troy asked, "How'd you manage this? I saw the guards come for you and figured that commander was . . ." his voice trailed off.

"Never mind. Just be ready to use these

when you get the signal," Face said.

Murdock pulled up behind Face and whispered to Troy, "I know you can't see too well now, but I want you to give me your honest opinion on my haa-a-a-" Face grabbed Murdock and pulled him back. "You can ask him tomorrow, Murdock," was all Face said. The three crept down the stairs and out the vent.

B.A. and Hannibal were using the commander's limousine for "spare parts" so they could enhance the old Buick that Murdock had driven from the airport. Murdock, Face and Amy joined them to help with the task. When they were finished, they had a veritable fortress complete with automatic weaponry. It was almost dawn before the Team finished clearing enough vegetation so the Buick could shoot into the compound. The Team was exhausted and they waited in silence until the sun began to rise.

At sun-up, the Team gathered and watched the compound slowly come to life. They knew it was just a matter of time before a guard realized they had escaped, and Hannibal wanted the element of surprise on his side. Shortly after 6:30 am, the guards entered the prison and began to lead the prisoners across the staging area to where they ate breakfast. The Team watched from the perimeter. The commander strolled outside and, slapping the cowhide swatch on his hand, looked around at the formation. Face could feel his anger welling. Hannibal put a hand on Face's shoulder to calm him and said, "Steady, everyone."

A minute later, B.A. and Hannibal slid into the car through the open windows while Murdock went up the north side and Face went around the south side of the encampment. Amy was positioned with a stationary automatic gun pointed directly at the ammo depot. Suddenly, a guard came running from the building yelling that the A-Team had escaped. The commander had only time enough to turn when B.A. roared into the compound. Hannibal was laying down fire to ward off the onslaught of emerging guards from the barracks. Amy was shooting at the ammo depot in the hopes of setting off an explosion large enough to bring the local authorities running. Murdock was taking out the tower guards with grenades and gunfire, and the prisoners unleashed a plethora of gunfire on the guards escorting them to the mess area.

Face headed straight for the building that had been heavily guarded prior to the onslaught of gunfire and shot the lock off the door. He entered and quickly looked around until he found what he wanted. Just then, the explosion occurred and knocked him to the ground. When he recovered, he grabbed the black attaché case and

ran out the door, almost running directly into the commander. Their eyes met and the hatred in Face's eyes were only matched by the fire in the commander's. For one brief second, Face thought about killing him. Instead, he grabbed the commander, turned him around in a neck hold and held a gun to his head.

The gunfire had stopped and the smoke was clearing as they approached the center area. The newly freed prisoners were gathering up the guards and herding them into the prison building. The sounds of sirens were getting louder. Murdock, B.A. and Amy were helping some of the men out of their shackles when Hannibal saw Face walking with the commander. After a little coaxing from Hannibal, Face decided to let go. Just before he released him, Face whispered, "I'll put your money to good use." Then he shoved the commander to the ground.

The police obviously didn't know who was who, so they pulled their guns on everyone. Hannibal explained the situation and the police chief seemed to believe it. The police gathered the commander and his guards and placed everyone in the prison building. Hannibal gathered the freed men and introduced himself as "Hannibal" Smith of the A-Team. He told them they were free to go, but he would appreciate it if they didn't mention that the A-Team was involved. Murdock was discussing "Hand" modeling to a grateful Troy Duffield when the police began to escort the former prisoners out of the compound. Finally, Troy had to say good-bye to Murdock as the police cars were waiting for him. Murdock and the rest of the A-Team piled into the Buick and drove back to the airport. During the drive, B.A. stated, "You know I ain't flying, Hannibal!"

"Okay, we'll take a cruise ship back," Hannibal said, thinking it was a good idea since the plane was very small. "Face, you'll have to scam us some passenger tickets."

Face grinned and said, "I don't think so." He opened the attaché case and looked down at the stacks of hundred dollar bills. Amy's eyes widened as she said, "My God, how much money is there?"

Face picked up the first stack and thumbed through it. "Oh, about two million," he said. B.A. slammed on the brakes and sent everyone

flying forward, including the money in the case.

"Two million dollars!" B.A. exclaimed.

"Yep, so if you want passage on a luxury liner, the only thing stopping you from having the best room on the ship is availability," Face smiled. "Yes siree. Some cases are worth the . . ." his voice trailed off, never really meaning to finish his thought.

* * * * *

B.A. and Hannibal were sitting around the penthouse suite, enjoying the life that wealth brings and listening to a discussion between Amy and Murdock on his "Hand" modeling career.

"I don't understand why you've given up on becoming a 'Hand' model, Murdock," Amy asked. "I think you would have made a great model. What made you change your mind?"

"Troy did," Murdock said somewhat sheepishly. "You see, 'Hand' models get paranoid about something happening to their hands and they usually end up going crazy and getting committed to the big house. And I don't want that to happen."

"What're you talkin' 'bout, foo! You already crazy and committed to the nut house!" B.A. growled and was ready to continue berating Murdock, except that Dr. Sullivan walked out of the bedroom.

"How's Face?" Hannibal asked.

"He's fine. He'll be a little sore as he was when I implanted the device, but no worse for wear," she answered.

Face walked out of the bedroom not feeling too well. "It seems I have spent most of this case feeling lousy. The money is the only thing that has made me feel good."

"It was nice not having to take those families' life savings," Amy pointed out.

Hannibal was leaning back in the sofa smiling from ear to ear and ready to say IT, when Amy interrupted. "You can't be serious. Your plan fell apart. We never had a chance to bring on Princess Samena because we were captured."

Hannibal began talking as if he couldn't contain himself, "Yes, but even with a few glitches, we still pulled it off, so the fact still remains: Don't you just love it when a plan comes together?"

It's the Thought That Counts

by N.N. Pellegrini

Amy wielded the turkey baster as if it were a katana and hollered, with barely restrained anger, "Murdock, if you touch this bird one more time I'm going to stick *you* in the oven instead!"

The surprised pilot backed away quickly and nearly fell on the kitchen floor when his sneakers slid on some spilled melted butter. "Sorry! Sorry, muchacha, the bird is yours! I swear, Chef Murdock vill stay on hees side of ze kitchen." As he straightened his chef's hat he added under his breath, "Even if ze assistant chef knows *nothing* about ze correct way to dress a Thanksgiving turkey."

"Assistant?" Amy growled. Biting back her next comment, she put the baster down and wondered if she hadn't been spending too much time around B.A. Though it seemed more as if Murdock had been the bad influence on her today, because only a truly insane person would get it in her head to ask the A-Team over for Thanksgiving dinner. Call it masochism, call it her maternal instinct kicking in. Call it whatever you want, now she just couldn't wait until it was all over.

It had started out a noble enough idea, one which she thought might help, to some extent, indicate how much she considered the Team to be her friends - part of her extended family. When Hannibal and the others had accepted her invitation a week ago, she'd begun making preparations immediately, planning every detail of the meal, buying supplies, cleaning the house . . . Her own family was scattered across the country - her father passed away, her mother living in Florida, her sister already married and living in New York with her own family. She'd missed having people to share the holidays with in the past years, and who better to join her than the Team?

Or so she'd foolishly thought. Now, on the glorious holiday, she'd been up since 5 a.m., shoving stuffing up a still only half-defrosted turkey's ass. Murdock had volunteered to help with the preparations, so she had arranged to pick him up at 9 a.m. on a holiday pass. But "assistant Chef" Murdock had quickly attempted to take over the operations, crying in horror at what he considered her paltry plans and insufficient supplies.

"Mon Dieu!" he'd exclaimed as soon as he opened her refrigerator. His accent was varying between French and Swedish depending on his current whim. "Where are ze sweet potatoes? Ze

fresh mushrooms for ze gravy? Why, B.A.'ll go through that many green beans as a light snack!"

And so, Murdock had dragged her back to the supermarket - the one and only supermarket in the nearby area that was actually open on Thanksgiving morning - to buy even more food. Which, of course, Amy got to flip the bill for. Not for the first time, she wondered what exactly Murdock did with his share of the profits from the Team's missions. Certainly it didn't go to supporting his wardrobe.

Things had only turned increasingly worse as the day had gone on. Murdock had apparently been watching too many episodes of the Muppet Show recently, because he had immediately gone into full-blown Swedish Chef mode as they began to cook. After six hours of "*Smir-nir-bor de-boor skih-dish-skih-door, Smir-nir-dir-boor nir dir mmm-bork! Bork! Bork!*" Amy was about to hit the roof.

Now, granted, Amy had no misconceptions of being a master of culinary techniques, but she figured that with "The Joy of Cooking" in hand and more than some experience behind the stove over the years, she could do just fine, but Murdock had other ideas about her abilities. First it was the way she prepared her green beans. ("Non non non, mon petite, you must *break* ze tips off, not *cut* them off!") Then it was the way she was making the coleslaw and the dressing. ("Vere are ze celery seeds? One cannot make ze proper cole slaw dressing vidout ze celery seeds!") By the time he started looking over her shoulder in dismay as she began on the mashed potatoes, she'd handed over all "side dish" duties to Chef Murdock and declared herself the master of the twenty-five pound turkey and the desserts. But, still, every so often, he couldn't help but make a comment or two that made her begin to wonder if a lobotomy wouldn't be in order soon . . . for Murdock or herself, she couldn't decide.

She had just shoved the turkey back in the oven after basting, praying that her cooking time calculations for the giant bird were correct, when her doorbell rang.

"I wonder who that could be . . ." she said as she left the kitchen and went to the door. For a moment she feared trouble - in the form of Decker, perhaps, but when she looked through the peep hole in the door she saw an unfamiliar blonde-haired woman waiting.

Amy opened the door partially, and asked, "May I help you?"

The young woman (she couldn't have been over 22, Amy guessed) unpuckered her pouty, over-glossed lips and responded, "Yeah, I'm lookin' for Jimmy? Jimmy Revell. The movie director."

"I'm sorry, there's no Jimmy here, you must have the wrong address." Amy tried to close the door but the woman stuck a well-manicured hand in the way, protesting, "But he told me this was where he was gonna be! I don't understand -"

"Look, I'm sorry, lady, but I got a turkey to deal with right now, and I don't have time to -"

"Aaaaah, Bambi, I'm so glad you could make it!" came Face's voice from behind Amy. Amy spun around to see the lieutenant standing there, all smiles. Face had sauntered over to the house around 2 p.m., already complaining about how hungry he was and raiding the fridge for snacks. When Amy had asked if perhaps he couldn't lend a hand with at least setting the table, he had mysteriously disappeared into the other room, mumbling something about needing to "check on some investments." B.A. had arrived a short while later with Hannibal, both men plopping themselves down in front of the TV to watch football.

Face now eased his way past Amy, taking Bambi by the hand and leading her into the foyer as if it were his own home. The young woman walked with an incredibly affected strut, clicking her high heels loudly; whether she was trying to imitate a runway model or a streetwalker Amy was undecided. Her outfit certainly seemed more appropriate for the latter. "Please, please come in. I'm sorry for any confusion here, just come on into the living room, I'll pop open the bottle of champagne . . ."

"Yes, *so sorry* for the confusion . . ." Amy echoed, glaring after Face, who, once he pointed Bambi in the right direction, came back to Amy with his smoothest, most apologetic look in place.

"I'm sorry, I forgot to mention Bambi was coming, I thought the invitation was open for us to bring dates as well. You're not upset, now, Amy, are you?"

"Oh no, not at all. The more the merrier, that's what they always say, isn't it? Now, if you'll excuse me, 'Timmy' -"

"- Jimmy."

"- Right, Jimmy, I have to get back to the kitchen before Chef Murdock accosts my buns."

Face's eyes widened at that remark.

"The ones in the *toaster oven*, Face, get your mind out of the gutter."

Face followed her into the kitchen, asking,

"How about some salad or something while we wait for the turkey? I didn't eat at all this morning and -"

"You want salad? Here!" Amy opened the refrigerator door, reached in, and tossed a head of iceberg lettuce at Face. "Knock yourself out."

Sensing eminent bodily harm if he stuck around much longer, he sheepishly left the kitchen, lettuce in hand. With a weary sigh, Amy went back to her buns, catching them just before they started to burn. Then she returned to the chocolate pudding pie, getting the pie crust in the toaster oven before Murdock could claim it for one of his concoctions.

"But, my sweet potatoes with coconut and brown sugar glaze, they -"

Amy spun around, a large cooking fork in her hand now that was much more threatening than the turkey baster. "- can share the regular oven with the turkey, Murdock. Now -" she put the fork in his hand, "why don't you put together some plate of vegetables and dip, or something, for the hungry mob in there before they go mutinous on us."

By some miracle, just about an hour later, the table was actually set, the candles lit, the glasses filled with milk (for B.A.) or champagne (everyone else), and food was everywhere. Amy almost couldn't believe that her plan had, in fact, "come together," more or less. With Hannibal's help, Murdock lugged the giant turkey onto its place at the head of the table, while Amy collapsed into her chair, sitting down for the first time in hours. Murdock's chef's hat was gone, replaced by a red-and-white Santa's hat.

"Murdock, it's Thanksgiving, not Christmas," Face observed, taking his eyes very momentarily off Bambi and her almost gravity defying bosom.

"Ah, but Thanksgiving is the start of the holiday season, is it not?" Murdock countered. "Now, Colonel, I feel 'tis only proper that you lead off the festivities with the ceremonial carving of the sacrificial bird."

Hannibal took the carving knives from Murdock, who saluted and then took his seat in between Amy and B.A.

Bambi commented, "Oooh, a colonel? Wow . . . were you in the army or something, Johnny?"

"Or something," Hannibal replied cryptically. Once an ample portion of the breast and then the dark meat was carved away and doled out onto each of their plates, B.A. led the group in a long, drawn-out prayer of thanks. Amy thought to herself that it was the most she'd ever heard the sergeant say at one time. When he was finally finished thanking what seemed

like everyone in the greater Chicago and L.A. areas, the feeding frenzy quickly began in full force.

Plates were passed around and filled to overflowing, all the while B.A. and Hannibal debated on the results of the afternoon football game and made predictions on the evening's match. Face was putting on a rather sickening display of feeding Bambi, who giggled in delight and was literally hanging all over Face, who in turn was occasionally going on and on about how good Murdock's cooking was.

"So, how's the turkey?" Amy asked eagerly. Everyone seemed to be taking it with large helpings of the thick mushroom gravy.

"It's . . . certainly a big bird," Hannibal remarked.

B.A. nodded his head and took his third helping of mashed potatoes.

"Face?"

"Huh? Oh . . . oh yeah, pretty good, Amy, yeah. Say, Murdock did you sauté these beans with lemon and rosemary?"

"Rosemary? Who's Rosemary? Did you bring another date tonight too, Faceman, and not tell me about it? Come here, Billy, here, have some turkey, good boy . . ." The champagne was going very quickly to Murdock's head and his delusions were coming out in full force.

"Don't be throwin' food on th'floor, foo'! Ain't no dog," B.A. snarled.

Bambi giggled at Murdock's antics. "Oh, Mr. Murdock, you are just a *scream*! You must be a comedian, right?"

"Or something like that," Face supplied, picking up a dinner roll and examining it critically. "Say, Amy you got any of these that are a little less . . . well done?"

Amy threw him a murderous look that caused him to quickly change his tune. "Right, never mind."

Leftovers were few and far between, especially by the time B.A. was finished eating. Amy was thankful that Murdock had insisted on the second supply trip - the food she had bought previously would have barely fed the mighty Baracus alone.

"Okay, I know the turkey was a little tough, but wait till you guys taste my desserts," Amy declared, getting up from the table, determined to prove her culinary prowess. "There's chocolate pudding pie, lemon meringue, pecan squares, even my grandmother's cherry bourbon balls . . ."

She was barely finished speaking when, somewhere off in the distance, the sound of faint but approaching sirens could be heard.

"Oh no, you don't think . . ." Face started.

"Think what, honey?" Bambi asked.

Hannibal took only a moment to decide.

"Yeah, I do." Suddenly all four men were on their feet. "Good thing we didn't park right outside, I was afraid something like this might happen. Amy, you got a back entrance outta here?"

"Well, um, there's the storm door out of the basement to the backyard, but -"

"That'll do. Come on guys, sorry to eat and run, kid, it was great."

"Now, wait -" Amy cried.

"Face, you and Bunny -"

"Bambi!"

"Rabbit, deer, whatever, you two stick together, Murdock, you'd better stay behind, easier to explain you being here than getting caught with us, just in case -" Hannibal was already at the cellar door.

"What's going on, Jimmy? Where -" Bambi asked.

"No sweat, hon, it's, erm, I'll explain on the way. Thanks Amy."

"But . . ."

B.A. patted her on the back so hard she nearly fell over. "Thanks for the chow, momma, gotta go." And with that, B.A. was the last to disappear, his gold chains rattling after him.

With the sirens almost at the door, Amy looked in disbelief to Murdock, who just shrugged, staggered a little bit on wobbly feet, and suddenly looking a little pale said, "Oh boy, um . . . I'll be right . . . back . . ." and staggered off to the bathroom.

Moments later, there was an insistent pounding at the door. Afraid to have it broken down if she didn't answer immediately, she opened the door, only to be pushed away harshly by the imposing Colonel Decker and his ever present trusty aide, Captain Crane.

"Just come on in, Colonel, why don't you," Amy remarked angrily.

"Where are they?" Decker growled, squinting around as MP's stormed through the house.

"Where are who, Colonel?"

"Don't play dumb with me, Miss Allen, we know the A-Team is here. Now, why don't you just tell us where they're hiding and make this easier on all of us."

"I don't know what you're talking about Colonel, I was just having a nice, quiet Thanksgiving dinner with a few of my good friends -"

"- And where are they? These *friends*." Decker spit out the last word as if it were distasteful.

"Gone, to catch a holiday show downtown. They had to leave early. Well, all except one of them . . ."

An MP came into the dining room, dragging a most uncooperative Murdock with him. "Colonel Decker, sir, we found him in the bathroom."

"Doing what?" Decker asked.

The MP looked somewhat embarrassed, "Er, well -"

"I believe they call it 'praying to the Porcelain God' in some polite circles," Murdock put in.

"He had a little too much to drink," Amy added.

"Do you mind explaining what Captain Murdock, a known associate of the A-Team, is doing here in your home, Miss Allen?" Decker insisted.

"He's just a friend of mine, Colonel. Is there anything illegal about that?" The MP had let go of Murdock, who seemed to be regaining his balance fairly quickly. He staggered into the kitchen while Amy continued to argue with Decker and the MP's combed her house. "I can bring you up on charges of illegal entry and search, Colonel, for this intrusion."

"You just try, Miss Allen, you just try."

"Colonel, sir," Crane called, coming down the stairs with several MP's behind him. "We've searched the upstairs, no signs of them."

"No signs of anyone downstairs, either, sir," a young lieutenant said, coming up from the basement. "Although the storm door was unlocked."

Decker looked to Amy with an accusatory glare. She shrugged and said, "I must have forgotten to lock it after I brought in the laundry this morning."

"I'm sure."

Murdock came back out of the kitchen, a plate of cherry spice balls in hand. The sweet aroma of caramel and roasted nuts wafted after him from the open kitchen door. "Cherry ball, Colonel? They're simply delicious."

Decker looked around at his men in frustration. The A-Team had been spotted in this neighborhood earlier this day. He had no doubt they had been here - he could almost smell their presence in the air. Yet he had not moved fast enough, or with enough force. Being a holiday, he had not been able to round up a sufficient number of MP's to cordon off the entire neighborhood with roadblocks the way he should have. Now, it was just another wasted effort. Perhaps not completely, though. He was determined to show Miss Allen that he did not buy her innocence. One of these days, he would break her. He knew it was only a matter of time.

Decker wanted to tell Captain Murdock just what he could do with his cherry balls but . . . they did look quite good . . . without a word of

thanks, he took one off the plate and inspected it carefully. Murdock popped one in his mouth and went around offering them to each of the MP's.

"Seeing how you're all here, Colonel, why don't you stay for dessert?" she asked with all the false sincerity she could muster. The more time she could hold him here, the more time the guys had to get out of the area.

"I don't think so, Miss Allen. All right, men, fall out." Finishing off the moist cookie, Decker gave her a final look and threatened, "Next time, we'll get them, and you'd better hope you're not around, or else you'll go down right with them."

"And a happy Thanksgiving to you too, Colonel," she replied, all smiles. The MP's followed their commander out, Crane being the last to leave. Before he did, he quickly snagged a second cherry ball off Murdock's tray.

Amy closed the door behind the departing military personnel, returned to the dinner room, and sat down at the table. Shaking her head, she declared, "Murdock, this has been, without a doubt, the most *surreal* holiday I have ever experienced."

"You haven't seen Christmas at the V.A., have you?" he replied wryly. The image brought an at least fleeting smile to Amy's face. Murdock stood up and said, "Go on, lay down, skeeter, take a load off. I'll take care of the dishes."

"Thanks, Murdock," Amy answered, too tired to argue and to not accept the offer. Sighing, she muttered, "So much for my grand Thanksgiving dinner." She dragged herself over to the sofa in the living room, where the TV was still on and the evening football game had just started up. The repetitive droning of the announcers and the cheering crowds lulled her to sleep long before Murdock finished cleaning up.

When he was done, he came out of the kitchen and smiled, watching her sleep for a few minutes, debating waking her up to get her to her properly to bed or just leaving her there. He decided on option number two. Leaving for a moment to retrieve a blanket, he came back downstairs and covered her snugly with the soft comforter. She didn't wake, just stirred slightly, pulling the blanket close and muttering something incomprehensible.

Pausing before heading upstairs to the spare bedroom, he bent down and kissed her ever-so-lightly on the forehead. "It's the thought that counts," he said.



An A-Team Christmas

by Rhonda Eudaly

"Now, when we get there," Lieutenant Templeton "Faceman" Peck briefed his team mates, "Hannibal and I will go in and make sure the sisters are ready for us. Then we'll signal for you two to come in."

Neither Captain H.M. Murdock nor Sergeant Bosco "B.A." Baracus seemed very happy with the division of labor.

"Come on, guys, we all agreed to do this," Face wheedled. "They're counting on us."

"That was before you told me I had to be an elf, Faceman," Murdock complained. "Look at me. Grown men should not have to dress like this."

"You finally look like what you are," B.A. growled. "A crazy fool."

Murdock glared at B.A. The pilot was dressed in a festive red and green outfit much more suited to a cheesy, low budget Shakespearean production than to a world renowned pilot. He wanted to shake his head, but every time he did so, the tiny bell on the harlequin hat jingled annoyingly. He crossed his legs grumpily, hoping the kelly green tights would split so he could put on a respectable pair of pants. The pointy toe of the red satin shoes bumped Face's leg.

"Besides, Murdock. Not many men have the legs to pull off the tights," Face continued. "You should be flattered."

"He's got a point, Murdock. None of the rest of us have the legs to be an elf," Lieutenant Colonel John "Hannibal" Smith agreed. "Besides, it'll make the kids really happy. And it is Christmas."

"Yeah. We gotta remember this is for the kids," B.A. said, mostly to himself.

The large African-American sergeant was a little better off than Murdock, but not by much. He drove his van in a red Santa suit, minus the white beard and hair and adding about a few

dozen layers of gold chain. At the moment, he looked anything but jolly. But it could have been worse. He could've been the elf.

B.A. pulled the van into the parking lot. Face and Hannibal climbed out at the door to the orphanage. Just as they were about to go inside, a large young man nearly ran them down. The young man jumped into a waiting car and raced away.

Hannibal motioned to B.A. "Go! Go!"

B.A. sped out of the parking lot after the car. Murdock eased into the front seat to help B.A. note where the car was going.

Face and Hannibal ran into the orphanage. Chaos reigned. Children and nuns were crying. Others were shouting for order. People were running about or frozen in place. No one noticed Face or Hannibal or their drawn hand guns. Both men saw the nun who was apparently in charge. The older woman was barking order to everyone around her like the many drill instructors the two officers had seen in their lifetime.

"Sister Mary Rose!" Face called out. "What happened?"

"Templeton? Templeton! And Colonel Smith!" The harried nun finally saw them. "I'd forgotten you were coming in all the confusion."

"What . . . what happened, Sister?" Hannibal asked.

"Vandals. Thugs. Thieves," the nun sputtered. "They came in last night and stole all the Christmas presents. We just found out. Oh, the poor children, now they won't have any Christmas."

"Don't worry, Sister Mary Rose," Face tried to soothe the older lady. "We'll get the kids presents back in time for Christmas."

"But tomorrow is Christmas! What can you and your friends do, Templeton?" Sister Mary

Rose asked. "I'm afraid it'll take more than a holiday miracle to save this Christmas."

"Then you better start praying, Sister," Hannibal told her. "And leave the rest to us."

Face and Hannibal holstered their weapons and went back to the front entrance. B.A. and Murdock were just parking the van when the other two came out of the building. The four regrouped in the parking lot.

"Sorry, Hannibal. We lost him in a barrio about ten minutes from here," Murdock reported. "Whoever that was, he's gone to ground."

"Then we need to flush 'em out," Hannibal said, pulling out a cigar. "And we gotta do it fast. Face, did you notice any broken windows, signs of forced entry?"

"I wasn't really looking, but no, I don't think so," Face replied.

"You thinkin' it was an inside job?" Murdock asked.

"Yeah. Probably that kid you guys chased down," Hannibal replied. "Come on, let's find out who's missing."

Moments later Sister Mary Rose joined the Team in her office. She fought reacting to Murdock and B.A.'s appearances. *They were doing it all for the kids*, she told herself, *and for Christmas*. But the costumes clashed terribly with their serious expressions.

"You were right, Colonel Smith," the nun said, sitting at her desk with a file. "There is one boy missing. Billy Costello. He was new here."

"What can you tell us about this boy, Sister?" Face asked.

"His parents died in a drive by shooting six months ago. No family came forward to take him, and he was too old to foster successfully. It was here or juvenile hall. Why do you ask, Templeton?"

"We think it was an inside job, Sister," Face told her. "Do you have any idea where he might have gone?"

"I can't believe Billy would be involved," Mary Rose protested. "He seemed to like it here. He was studying well. Interacting with the other children. Taking responsibility."

"That could be why he ran," Murdock said to Hannibal.

"I don't think he could do this," the nun protested.

"We're not saying he did, Sister," Hannibal told her. "But he's our only connection to this matter. All we want to do is talk to him. We can't do that if we don't know where he can be found."

Sister Mary Rose thought about that for a minute, then passed the address across the desk

to the colonel. Hannibal tucked it into his pocket. The Team stood and filed out of the office.

"So what do you want us to do, Hannibal?" Face asked once they were outside.

"B.A., let's check out this address. I'm betting it's close to where you lost Billy and his friends before. Then we'll find him, and hopefully get the stuff back before they fence it all."

"Now, Hannibal, I don't understand why a bunch of street punks would steal a bunch of toys and clothes from an orphanage, and at Christmas. What's up with that?" Murdock asked, shaking his head. The movement was accompanied by the soft jingle of the bell on his hat.

"Who knows?" Face responded. "There can't be that much worth selling."

"That's one reason we have to find Billy," Hannibal said. "He's our only link to the slime balls who stole the stuff and why."

A short while later the van paused at an intersection. Murdock looked around them. "This is where we lost him before, Colonel."

"That's what I thought," Hannibal said. "This address is only a couple of streets up and to the right. We should probably go in on foot. We don't want to scare the kid off before we find out what we want to know."

B.A. pulled the van off the road and the Team climbed out. They decided to forego the larger automatic weapons on this first visit. If things didn't go exactly as planned, there was always time to come back and deck the halls, if there was a need.

"B.A., you and Murdock go around back," Hannibal directed. "If he is here, we don't want him spooked and bolting out the back. Face and I'll try a gentler approach first. After all it is Christmas."

B.A. and Murdock disappeared behind the house as Face and Hannibal approached the front door. Face knocked on the door, and it was almost immediately opened by an older, sweet looking lady.

"Yes?" she asked pleasantly. "Can I help you?"

"Yes, ma'am," Face began with a bright smile. Hannibal eased back to let the lieutenant work his charm. "Is Billy at home? We'd like to talk to him."

The older woman's expression changed to be a little suspicious. "Is Billy in some sort of trouble?"

Face didn't miss a beat. "Oh, no, ma'am. We're from the Leadership of Tomorrow Scholarship Fund. We've heard of Billy's remarkable turn around academically, and we wanted to meet

the lad in person before offering him a full scholarship."

"Well, isn't that nice, but Billy hasn't lived here in over a year. He's over at the orphanage now. He comes by every so often to visit, though."

"Can I ask when he was here last, ma'am?"

The older woman thought for a moment. "Two weeks ago. But we expect him tomorrow for Christmas. I'm making his favorite dinner, you know."

"That's nice, ma'am," Face replied. "Thank you for your time. We won't take up anymore of it. Good bye." Face and Hannibal left the porch. Face looked at the colonel. "I believe her, Hannibal."

"Yeah, let's get B.A. and Murdock. He's not here."

The Team regrouped on the side of the house behind a small group of trees. Murdock scanned the empty lots behind the houses on that side of the street.

"Colonel, check that out," Murdock said continuing to look in the distance. "Warehouses."

Hannibal looked where Murdock indicated. "They look pretty deserted."

"And there's a drainage ditch over there. Looks pretty big. Might make a decent hiding place," Murdock added.

"Good work, Captain," Hannibal said, clapping the elf on the shoulder. "Let's get back to the van."

Only a moment later, B.A. turned to the van along the huge drainage ditch heading toward the warehouses. All four team members kept their eyes peeled for any sign of habitation on the otherwise deserted industrial area. It took only a few moments more to spot a car outside one of the warehouses.

"That's it, Colonel," Murdock reported, pointing. "That's the car B.A. and I chased earlier."

"And Sister Mary Rose thought we'd need to have a Christmas miracle to pull this one off," Hannibal said with a grin. "Looks like she kept her end of the deal. It's time we do the same."

Billy Costello stood inside the warehouse with two other young men in rough clothing. The two sat at a table near a pile of presents. Billy kept shaking his head. "Why did you have to do this?" he kept asking.

"What do you care?" one of the rough young men asked.

"Come on, Rick, they're orphans! They don't have anything. Why take their presents?" Billy demanded. "They haven't done anything to you."

"They're in my territory," Rick replied. "That's all that matters."

"But it's Christmas!"

"But it's Christmas," Rick mocked. "And why have you gotten soft so suddenly? You helped start all of this when you went to the orphanage to begin with."

"I thought we decided there was nothing there worth stealing," Billy protested.

"That was before the generosity of the community to help those less fortunate," Rick sneered. The other young man laughed.

Billy paced. "What are you going to do with all this stuff, Rick? It's not worth fencing. It's just a bunch of toys and clothes."

"I'm going to have myself a merry little Christmas. Me and Julio here."

"Think again slime ball," Hannibal growled as he and the Team burst into the room."

Rick and Julio leapt to their feet, drawing their guns. Murdock froze them in their tracks by firing his machine gun into the ceiling. The boys dropped their guns. "I guess we know who's been naughty this year and we don't even have to check twice."

"What is this?" Rick demanded. "Who is this clown?"

Murdock was across the room and poked his finger hard into Rick's chest. "I'm not a clown. I am an elf. Don't you forget it, pal."

Hannibal looked around and let his glance fall on Billy. "You're Billy Costello. Aren't you?"

"Yes," Billy told them. "But I didn't help them."

"Then why are you here?" Face asked.

"I was trying to talk them into taking the stuff back. I never wanted this."

"I'll believe you for now, kid," Hannibal told Billy.

"This stuff belongs to the orphans," B.A. growled. "We're taking it all back to them."

"Hey, this stuff is ours now," Julio protested.

"So young. So stupid," Hannibal replied with a tscking sound. "B.A., enlighten our young friends."

B.A. gripped Julio's shirt and lifted the Latino boy off his feet. The boy's feet flailed helplessly against the air. "Why'd you take the orphans Christmas presents?"

Julio only gagged his answer.

B.A. put the kid down. Face told the larger man, "Santa's supposed to be jolly."

B.A. shrugged and dropped Julio in a pile of quivering clothing. "Do we have a problem, kid?" he demanded, turning his attention to Rick.

"Take the stuff, man!" Rick yelled nervously. "It's not worth this."

Hannibal walked over to Rick and gripped the boy's collar. "You're not going to mess with

the orphanage or Billy Costello once we've parted company again. You got that?"

Rick gulped and nodded. "Yes, sir."

Hannibal let him go. "Now, take your friend and go. You won't like it if we run across your path again."

Rick pulled Julio to his feet and the two boys ran from the warehouse.

Hannibal looked at his Team. "Come on, guys. Let's get Billy and the stuff back to the orphanage. It looks like it will be a Merry Christmas after all."

About an hour later, the Team and Billy were once more in Sister Mary Rose's office. The nun listened intently to Billy's story.

"When I first came here, Rick and Julio had been friends of mine. We thought, then, that we might be able to find something worth stealing," Billy told her, looking down at his shoes. "We didn't find anything. And I had no idea they were still thinking about it. So when they stole everything last night . . . I knew who it was, and I went after them. I hoped I could get all that stuff back . . . I'm sorry, Sister Mary Rose."

"Yes, Billy, I see that," the nun replied. "Between your explanation and Colonel Smith's

report, I know you had nothing to do with this incident except for helping recovering the lost items. The police have picked up the boys responsible for the theft. Now go join the other children. We'll be along shortly."

"Yes, Sister," Billy said, leaving the room.

Sister Mary Rose waited until the door closed behind the boy before she continued. "Thank you all for everything. It's going to be a wonderful Christmas for the children after all. Thank you."

The Team followed the nun out to the orphanage's common room. It rang with the sounds of children laughing. The presents had been returned to under the Christmas tree. Hannibal and Face watched the kids happily mob B.A. and Murdock. None of the children seemed to care they had a non-traditional Santa Claus or a six-foot elf, and the two men seemed to be having a ball with the kids.

"I love Christmas," Hannibal said, leaning on Face's shoulder. "It's almost as nice as when a plan comes together."□

"And God□bless us every one," Face amended.



Drive

by Gill Dunn

B.A. Baracus fell out of bed and decided it definitely wasn't going to be his day.

Although the early L.A. sunshine tried its best to squeeze into the darkened room, the curtains remained tightly drawn. Sitting on the edge of his bed, B.A. also decided that this must be how it felt to have a hangover. Being strictly a tea-totaller himself he couldn't rely on personal experiences, but the pounding headache and nauseous feeling in his stomach reminded him of the disabled state his friends quickly dissolved into on their short but well-oiled 'R and R' during their years in Viet Nam. Even now, he could see Hannibal and Face staggering out of some sleazy bar in Pleiku, their tuneless singing fading out as they disappeared down the street, while he - B.A. Baracus, being just about the only sober person left in the place, was expected to haul the practically comatose Captain Murdock out from the table and get him back to the hotel more or less in one piece. Unfortunately, there was a U.S. Air Force base just outside the town, and what the Vietcong army had spent months trying - and failing - to accomplish, Murdock and his 'flying buddies' had managed to do in one evening. Nobody would be flying anything the next morning.

B.A. grimaced as he tried to ignore the increasing headache, concentrating instead on getting dressed. For once, he skipped breakfast save for a few spies of hot coffee, which he took before making his way down to the parking lot and clambering into his beloved van. Normally, he liked to inspect the van for the smallest sign of wear, the slightest hint of rust, the merest glimpse of a greasy fingerprint. No doubt about it, B.A. loved his van as though it were a member of the Team. In fact, he probably loved it more than one certain Team member, but today he didn't feel like loving anything or anybody. It would be a brave man, or a crazy one, who tangled with B.A. today.

Noisy traffic roared and belched its way along the main freeway. This, coupled with the oppressive mid-morning heat, did nothing to lighten B.A.'s bad mood, and by the time he reached the downtown docks where Hannibal had arranged to meet, he felt considerably worse. *If only this headache would ease off*, he thought.

The painkillers he'd ingested earlier had taken little effect apart from making him feel sick again. Scanning the area for signs of life, he realized there were none - the whole waterfront was deserted. B.A. checked the time again, sighing with impatience as the minutes ticked by. Soon he was drumming his fingers on the steering wheel in agitation, his patience stretched thin. He was even considering pulling out altogether when a car came into view at the far end of the dock, and B.A. squinted into the sun - a mistake as it made his head throb even harder and stars of light danced in front of his eyes - to gain a better view. The car came near, revealing his friends: Hannibal, Faceman, and - Murdock. B.A. groaned. Just what he needed. *Well, if crazy fool starts any jibber jabber, he thought, he'll end up with a bigger headache than the one I got.*

Hannibal's cheerful voice brought B.A. out of his murderous thoughts. "Glad you could make it, Sergeant. Sorry we're late - decided to pick Murdock on the way." Hannibal smiled mischievously. "Sorry 'bout that," he added before striding off into the warehouse, leaving B.A. to wonder whether Hannibal was sorry for being late or sorry for bringing Murdock. But then, B.A. doubted whether Hannibal was really sorry for either.

Faceman appeared from nowhere, giving B.A. a smile that would have lit up a Christmas tree. "Hiya big guy, how you doin'?" BA gave no reply, nor any indication that he'd even heard the cheery greeting save for a deepening frown as he started to follow the others into the warehouse.

Murdock, however, had decided to turn awkward. He didn't know it at the time but turning awkward at that precise moment was something akin to putting a loaded gun to one's head and pulling the trigger. Blithely unaware of the mortal danger he was talking himself into, Murdock busied himself in persuading his loyal but invisible dog, Billy, out of Face's 'vette without damaging the upholstery. "C'mon now, Billy, be a good dog," he crooned to the empty space. "Careful now. Good boy!" Billy had apparently been successful, leaving not so much as a muddy

paw print. "Okay, let's go." Murdock turned, only to find himself face to face with the 220 pounds that was B.A. Baracus. "Oh, hiya B.A. Nice day, huh?" Murdock managed to say.

Sadly, B.A. didn't agree. "Not for you it ain't, sucker!" he growled, grabbing hold of Murdock by his jacket with one mighty bejeweled hand and wrenching the unfortunate pilot's arm up his back with the other.

"Owww! Take it easy B.A., that hurts!" yelled Murdock, but B.A. couldn't hear him. In his head, sledgehammers were pounding away at his brain.

"Don't wanna hear anymore of that invisible stuff, y'hear!"

"Sure B.A., I promise!" Murdock said as sincerely as he could. Although a good few inches taller than B.A., Murdock was now standing on tip-toe in an attempt to ease the pressure off his shoulder, which now felt like it was about to be pulled right out of its socket.

"Okay, just don't forget it or next time I'll rip your arm right off! Understand?" Murdock nodded dumbly, his eyes closed in pain. Thankfully, the grip slackened as B.A. let him go, striding off to join the others while Murdock massaged his wrenched muscles.

When he was sure B.A. was out of ear shot, Murdock knelt down to have a word with Billy. "Looks like I'd better do this one alone, little fella. The big guy's in one mean mood today. I'll see you around, okay?" Satisfied that Billy understood his every word, he stood up and made his way to the warehouse, gingerly rubbing his sore shoulder.

Later that day, a loud angry voice rang out from the same warehouse. "I warned you, fool! You messed up and now you're gonna pay!"

B.A. was in a mean temper. Hannibal's plan hadn't come together at all, thanks mainly to H.M. Murdock. The unfortunate pilot had been knocked senseless after turning his back on the Team's latest victims, who hardly believed their luck and metaphorically headed for the hills without hesitation. Now, B.A. was quickly advancing on the hapless Murdock, and Murdock, who wanted to keep his body in one piece, was just as quickly retreating out of arm's reach.

However, his backward retreat was cut short when he found himself slammed up against the warehouse wall. Summoning as much confidence as he could muster, he prepared to take B.A. "Wasn't my fault, B.A.! You stay away from me!" B.A. actually seemed to hesitate, shaking his head as if trying to deny something. Murdock, encouraged but misguided at the action,

blundered onward. "Stay away, or I'll set Billy on you ... Oh no."

It was too late. B.A. took one more step forward and a swinging right fist connected with Murdock's chin. The force was enough to knock the lighter man clear off his feet and leave him in an untidy heap on the floor. "What did ya do that for?" the dazed pilot managed to whine, now both confused and scared because B.A. had actually hit him.

Standing over Murdock, B.A. clenched and unclenched his fists in an effort to control his own pain and anger. Inside his head the sledgehammers still pounded relentlessly. He could feel nothing but pain, hear nothing but the pounding in his brain. "Get up, fool!" he thundered. "Get up 'fore I pound you into the ground!"

Murdock decided he was probably safer staying on the floor. At least he wouldn't have as far to fall, he thought, wrongly. He tried to escape B.A.'s wrath by scrambling amongst some boxes which had tumbled down during the fight, but the big man grabbed him by his collar, hauling him to his feet. "I'm gonna stop your stupid jibber-jabber once and for good!" For once in his existence, Murdock was dumb struck, his swollen mouth refusing to form words that might - or more likely might not - have saved him.

The blows to Murdock's face weren't particularly hard, and perhaps somewhere deep down in B.A.'s subconscious, some stronger instinct took over, preventing him from seriously hurting his friend. Even so, the mass of rings which adorned B.A.'s fingers caught Murdock's checks, causing small but deep cuts that bled freely. Murdock staggered backwards and would have fallen had not B.A. still been holding onto him by his jacket. "Now shut up and get movin'!" B.A. told him, giving him a shove in towards the door.

It was quite fortunate that, short moments later, Hannibal and Face returned to the warehouse from their own tasks and interrupted the fray.

"You all right?" Hannibal was immediately examining the pilot's injuries.

"I guess so, Colonel," came the mumbled reply from Murdock.

Face decided to chip in, "Boy, can't leave you two alone for a minute, can we? We go off to town to inform the cops, we come back, and look at the state of you guys!" he said, waiting for the arguments that inevitably followed, but none came.

"Okay, so what went wrong?" asked Hannibal, offering Murdock a clean cloth to put to his face.

"Well, we had 'em holed up in there for sure, Colonel, and then I guess I must have taken

my eye of them for a second as they kinda - you know - escaped," he finished lamely. "After knocking me out, of course" he added quickly, as though that absolved him of any blame.

Murdock didn't think Hannibal looked very convinced. "Well, Sergeant?" asked Hannibal, turning to B.A.

"Fool's right," B.A. announced, "for a change." With that, he ambled over to his van, parked in the cool shade. Folding his arms and clamping an unlit cigar between his teeth, Hannibal fixed Murdock with a hard gaze, one designed especially to make a person feel extremely uncomfortable. Murdock had seen the colonel use the same tactic on unfriendlies whom he'd suspected of not telling the complete truth, and now he knew just how it felt. He was compelled to add more to his admittedly unconvincing story, but he felt too miserable to think anything up - his shoulder hurt, his face hurt, his whole body hurt, and besides, it was too damn hot to think. Instead, he avoided Hannibal's gaze by shoving his hands in his pockets and contemplating the ground between his feet.

Cool and perfectly unruffled despite the heat, Face had been following the proceedings in bewilderment. "Gee, I'm glad that's sorted out. For a minute there I thought we were all in trouble." He grinned broadly as though trying to persuade the others to do the same, but there were no takers to his offer.

For his part, Hannibal was too busy deciding on a plan of action for the rest of the afternoon. After considering the day's events, he decided to quit while they were still just about ahead. Glancing at B.A., who was still leaning, eyes closed, against the van, he called over, "B.A.! You take Murdock back to the V.A., and you, Captain . . ." Hannibal said, turning back to Murdock, "had better start thinking up an excuse to explain why you've come back looking like you've been hit by a bus. I'll go with Face, in the 'vette. Stay in touch," Hannibal called back as he walked toward the car, but Murdock trailed after him.

"Colonel? I was kinda hoping to ride with the Faceguy, 'cause Billy here, he . . ." Instantly Murdock froze and cast a worried look in B.A.'s direction, expecting to see the big man coming for him, but suprisingly B.A. seemed unconcerned; in fact, he'd hardly moved at all during the whole conversation.

"Well, Captain?" Even Hannibal, hot and tired, was getting impatient

"Er, that is . . ."

"What's going on?" Hannibal asked irritably. "Is there some kind of problem here?" He looked across at Face for help but only received a puzzled shrug of the shoulders in reply.

"Problem, sir?" Murdock was all respectful innocence now, worried in case he was made to admit more than he really wanted.

Fortunately, Hannibal decided even he'd had enough and jabbed Murdock in the chest with his cigar to make his point. "I want you, and Billy, to go with B.A., and we'll see you later. All right?"

"But Colonel, I . . ."

"No buts, Captain. Move!"

"Okay, okay, I'm movin'," Murdock grudgingly complied, making his way over to the van, muttering under his breath and kicking up dust in bad temper.

"I think he's getting worse, Face," said Hannibal, who was sprawled in the passenger seat of the 'vette.

Face pointed a finger at him in mock protest. "Hey, that's supposed to be my line." Then his expression softened, mischief sparkling in his eyes. "But they do say, you know, that genius is akin to madness."

Hannibal pondered on these words of wisdom as he stared after the van, watching it disappear into the shimmering distance, and when he turned to Face his expression was one of uncertainty. "You're kiddin me, right?"

"Would I lie to you?" Face gave him his best "innocent" look, but Hannibal knew him too well and his face broke into a wide grin.

"Right!"

Conning his way into the West Los Angeles V.A. Hospital was no longer a challenge for Templeton "Faceman" Peck. The irregular shift hours of the staff made it all too easy for him to don a doctor's white coat and act like some enthusiastic medic. Then all it needed was Faceman's special brand of confident charm, a flash of that utterly sincere smile at a pretty nurse and the whole facility was his in a matter of minutes. In practice, though, he was interested only in one particular section of the hospital - the psychiatric ward, which held "Howlin' Mad" Murdock as one of its prized guests.

Reaching Murdock's room, Face paused, casually checking his "notes" whilst secretly making sure that the corridor was clear. He tried the door and, finding it unlocked, quickly entered, closing it quietly behind him. The room was lit only by a bedside lamp and it took Face's eyes a few seconds to adjust to the darkness after the bright fluorescent lights of the corridor. His eyes focused and refocused until he could see through the gloom. There on the bed, curled fast asleep, was Murdock, one hand clamped between his knees, the other under his head, cradling his



cheek. Face felt a warm tug at his heart and silently admonished himself for being so soft. Music filtered through from the stereo, adding to the peaceful atmosphere.

*"Who's gonna hold you down, when you shake,
Who's gonna come around, when you break,
You can't go on, thinking nothing's wrong,
Who's gonna drive you home, tonight . . ."*

Face knew he'd heard the song before, somewhere special, but he couldn't quite place it. Well, he thought, *it sure as heck isn't Bruce Springsteen*. He moved closer and sat down on the edge of the bed. Murdock looked so peaceful that Face longed to be able to leave him there, but he knew he couldn't. Perhaps one day, they would all sleep so contentedly.

Placing a hand on Murdock's warm head, Face leaned over and lightly kissed his friend on the forehead. "C'mon Sleeping Beauty. Rise 'n shine." As Murdock stirred, Face re-enforced his presence. "Hey, it's me - Prince Charming," he said, shaking Murdock's shoulder. Murdock opened brown, sleepy eyes and gazed at Face, who smiled encouragingly. "Get your shoes on, we're goin' bye-byes. Where are they anyway?"

"Huh?"

"Your shoes!" Face hissed back, conscious now of the need to hurry and also a stab of guilt at his own self-indulgence. Giving an impatient sigh, he began scrabbling about under the bed in search of the tatty baseball boots, and although he discovered many things, including a stack of Zane Grey westerns, a basketball, and a Superman jigsaw depicting the Man of Steel in flight over the New York skyline, there was no sign of the shoes. But then, if the unfortunate Lieutenant had been in the position to ask one of the charming V.A. nurses, she could have told him that H.M. Murdock always slept with his shoes under his pillow.

When Face returned empty-handed from his expedition, he was dismayed to find the usually enthusiastic pilot had simply turned over and gone back to sleep, a pillow cuddled in his arms like a long lost lover.

"For Pete's sake Murdock, will you come on!"

"G'way," came the muffled reply, making Face wonder if a bucketful of water would be taking things too far. Instead, he settled down on the bed again, mentally chewing over the last few day's events. Thought followed thought until . . . "Murdock, you're not still hurt, are you?"

"No. Not especially."

Not especially, thought Face. *What does that mean?* He gave a nervous laugh. "That's good, 'cause one sick member of the Team is all I

can cope with right now."

Murdock turned over and sat up, his knees drawn up, his chin resting on them and his long arms wrapped protectively around his legs. "Say what? Who's sick?"

"B.A., that's who. Can you imagine what it's been -"

"What's the matter with him?" Murdock interrupted. Sensing the concern, Face told him how the sergeant had collapsed in his apartment, seemingly for no reason, and how Hannibal had taken the risk of admitting him into the Emergency Ward of the local hospital.

"Seems like the big guy was suffering from some sort of migraine attack, brought on, the Doc said, by this heatwave, or could've been an allergy to something he ate, or maybe both." He shrugged, letting the words sink in, then carried on, "Boy, can you believe that? B.A. flattened by a headache!"

Face prattled on, but Murdock had tuned him out. *No wonder B.A.'s been acting so mean*, he thought. He remembered the guys at the V.A., those with metal plates where their skulls used to be, who suffered the same affliction. He remembered how they'd bang their heads against the wall in an effort to block out the crushing pain, sobbing with frustration at their vain attempts. Murdock shivered at the memory, bringing a look of concern from his friend who had just realized that he was talking to himself.

"You okay, Murdock?"

"Yeah, I'm fine - well, fine as I'll ever be."

"You can say that again," Face murmured, with a look of long-sufferance.

Murdock couldn't resist. "Well, fine as . . ."

"Okay, okay, wise guy," Face shut him up, knowing he'd asked for that one. Dragging the elusive boots from under his pillow, Murdock slipped them on and began wrestling with the laces, seemingly incapable of threading them through the holes in any sort of logical order.

Face found himself itching to help, but it seemed absurd. "You want help with that?" he asked, tentatively. Murdock looked up at him and smiled knowingly, and Face realized he was just going to have to sit this one out.

The soft music and low lights played on his tired mind, and soon he was drifting off into memories. The first time he'd ever seen Captain H.M. Murdock was when he and Hannibal had been on R and R in Saigon. They'd spent the evening drinking in a small, crowded bar where, at a corner table, sat a group of rowdy "air jockeys." They were helicopter pilots from the Air Cavalry and a few pilots who flew the heavy Phantom jets that made the bombing runs. Sitting huddled over their drinks, they laughed and

argued, swapped stories and compared notes, seemingly oblivious of everything around them. Then, halfway through the evening, a waitress had dropped a full tray of glasses with a crash that sent the roomfull of war-torn servicemen diving for cover at the unexpected noise. All of them, that was, except for two. One had been the Special Forces colonel named John Smith, whose only reaction was to light up a fresh cigar. The other had been one of the pilots - the one wearing a regulation army green T-shirt and a camouflage jacket and a very non-regulation blue baseball cap. He'd had a drink half-raised and now looked around in confusion at the empty chairs around him. Face had sheepishly raised his head just in time to see the pilot notice the colonel, who was in turn looking back at him through the smoky haze.

The pilot had grinned broadly. "Cheers, Colonel!" he'd shouted before gulping down the rest of his drink.

"I love it," the colonel had quietly replied, "when a plan comes together," and then he too smiled. He'd just found the fourth and last member of his "Team." It had all happened in seconds, but from then on, Face recalled, life had just never been the same.

A wry smile formed on his mouth as he was dragged unwillingly back into the present. Out of sheer mischief, he took the baseball cap from where it lay on the bed and gave Murdock's thinning hair a quick ruffle, then placing the cap on his bowed head before the pilot could protest.

"You'd better cut that out, Faceman, or you'll have the big guy jealous. You know how he feels about me." Uncertain, Face stared down at him, but when Murdock finally finished his laces and looked up, the sparkle in his eyes showed Face he'd been had.

"You shouldn't mock the insecure," Face said, trying to sound insulted, but Murdock only sniggered. He'd never met anyone less insecure than Templeton "Faceman" Peck in all his life.

Now, that same pilot sat nervously in the hospital reception while Face went off to collect B.A. With him sat Hannibal, who was trying to read the newspaper, but Murdock's incessant fidgeting became too distracting and Hannibal's patience snapped.

"Murdock!" he said, looking pointedly at his friend, who took the hint and went off to torment the Robo-serve machine instead. Hannibal gave a big sigh and went back to his paper until a few minutes later when he heard Face and B.A. coming down the corridor. Carefully folding his newspaper, he stood up to greet them. "Good to

have you back, Sergeant, we've missed you," Hannibal said, giving B.A. a welcoming pat on the shoulder.

B.A. was suddenly embarrassed and tried to cover it by muttering something that sounded like, "Yeah, I missed you too," but Hannibal couldn't be sure and he and Face both smiled knowingly at their friend's discomfort.

"Hi, B.A." Murdock's unenthusiastic greeting floated over from where he stood by the coffee machine. B.A. stared at him, his face set in concentration as though he was trying to grasp a half forgotten memory. Then, his expression slowly turned to realization and quickly back into the familiar scowl.

"Damn fool," he muttered to himself, causing Face and Hannibal to exchange glances, both thinking he was referring to Murdock, but they were wrong. It wasn't Murdock that B.A. was calling a fool, but himself.

Face, impatient to be somewhere else, started to herd everyone outside, telling them that it was unhealthy to hang around hospital waiting rooms. "All those germs, you know."

Outside, the mid-morning sunshine warmed the ground, but a gentle breeze helped to keep the temperature a few degrees down on the previous day's heatwave, and now the air smelt cool and fresh, especially after the clinical atmosphere of the hospital.

Not surprisingly, Face headed straight for his car. "Hop in Hannibal, I'll drive you home," Face told him, "but then you're on your own because I . . ." he paused to straighten his already perfectly straightened tie, "have a date."

"That's very nice, kid," Hannibal said, his voice spiked with sarcasm. "You sure you can spare the time?"

Face thought this remark unworthy of a reply, possibly because he couldn't think of anything caustic enough. *One up to Hannibal*, he thought as they drove off with Hannibal's amused laughter ringing in his ears.

Meanwhile, B.A. was falling back into his old routine. Taking a cloth from his back pocket, he worked his way round the van, first checking the oil, then wiping a greasy spot off the windscreen, then he polished the front fender until it reflected the sunlight like a mirror. Occasionally, he'd glance up and see Murdock, pale bruises shadowing his face, his dark eyes watching him patiently waiting for the first word of approval - a sign that everything was okay. B.A. polished harder, working out his guilt and anger on the unfeeling metal bumper until at last, he stopped polishing and clambered into the driver's seat of the van.

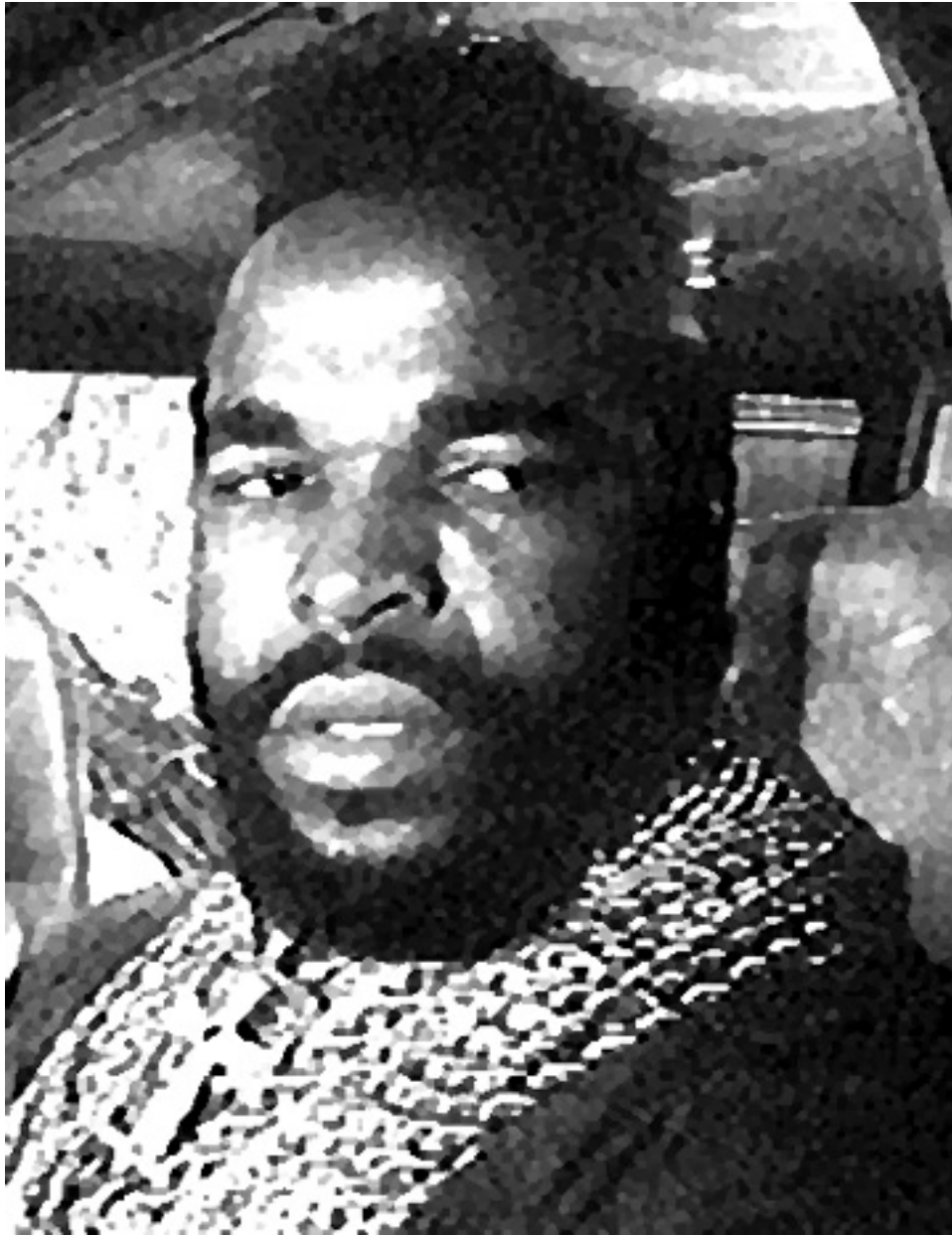
As he started the engine, so the radio

crackled into the hazy air, *"Who's gonna pick you up when you fall, who's gonna come around, when you call . . ."* Turning down the volume, he leant over and opened the passenger door. "Hey, Murdock!" he shouted across at the downhearted pilot, who had been in the middle of calculating how long it would take him to get back to the V.A. - on foot.

At B.A.'s call, he looked up. "What?" See-

ing the scowling face glaring at him across the car lot, he felt like his heart would sink to his boots, but suddenly, B.A.'s stony features were transformed by an admittedly rare but never-the-less beautiful smile, and Murdock thought it was most wonderful smile he'd ever see.

"Get in, fool!" B.A. told him softly, "I'll drive you home."



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"Can you fly it?" Mulder asked dubiously. He'd been impressed by the pilot's record and abilities, but this was a ship unlike any he'd ever seen.

"Hey, buddy, if it's got wings, I can fly it," Murdock boasted.

"It hasn't got wings," Face pointed out.

Murdock looked taken aback for a moment, then shrugged. "Should be even easier, then, huh?"

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Sockii Press is always looking for new A-Team material!

We will accept stories in any genre or style you can imagine - humor, romance, hurt/comfort, crossover. Alternative universes and Mary Sue's. Adult straight or even slash! Information articles, filks, poetry - and **ARTWORK!** Stories based on other characters played by Dirk, Dwight, George, and T. Full-length novels or half-page scenarios - anything goes!

The following titles are either currently in the making or proposed for future publication, **if there appears to be enough interest in the material** going to print. If no one seems interested, they won't happen. To contribute to any of the below titles or indicate an interest in purchasing these if/when they go to print, please write the editor at: **Nicole Pellegrini, 2429 Locust St. #315, Philadelphia, PA 19103**. Enclose an SASE, please! Submissions should be sent typewritten, along with (if possible) a hard copy on floppy disk, Mac-format preferable but not necessary. If sending PC-based files, please save them in Text Only or Rich Text Format. Submissions also accepted via email to: pellegrini@eniac.seas.upenn.edu. No set length or style guidelines, except if otherwise indicated.

WHERE'S MARY SUE WHEN YOU NEED HER? A "special edition" A-Team 'zine - all Mary Sue stories! Make it silly or make it sexy - so long as you've written yourself into the story in some fashion. Will also take stories involving characters outside of the A-Team played by Dwight, Dirk George, T - for instance, Battlestar Galactica, ST:TNG, etc. Would like to go to print sometime in mid '97 - contact if interested.

PLANS SCAMS AND VANS 4. Our next issue is already filling up fast. At this time we already have submissions from Irene Schwarting, Laura Michaels, Rhonda Eudaly, Natasha McKee, and Christopher Bunting. What else? That's up to you! Any type of A-Team stories, up to PG-13 in rating, will be accepted for this 'zine, also information articles, artwork, etc. Will be at least 100 pages, will go to print by mid to late '97 depending.

A TEAM THROUGH TIME. If we can get enough alternative-universe stories, we'll do a separate A-Team 'zine for them. Put the Team in a different time-line. Write a "what if" story, like: what if the Team members *weren't* wanted by the military? What if the 5th season never happened? Be creative.

DEADLY MANEUVERS. A more "hard-core" A-Team 'zine, if we get appropriate submissions. If it's too risqué or too serious for Plans Scams Etc., this is where we'll use it.

STRANGE BUSINESS. Multi-media (that's right, I DO like something besides A-Team, really!). Got a good conspiracy story? Something in the NOWHERE MAN, STRANGE LUCK, X-FILES universes? Or any other media universe, so long as the story involves a conspiracy of some kind, UFOs, or other forms of high strangeness!

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

GILL DUNN is a 42 year old library assistant. She lives in Manchester, England with her son the Cookie Monster!!!!(Daniel) and 2 cats, Candy and Friday. As well as The A-Team, she loves banana and kiwi fruit butties, boxes of Maltesers, the Green Bay Packers, X'Mas and Manchester United. She dislikes washing up, mowing the lawn, anything with coconut in it and Newcastle United. Her ambition is to wear a Judge Dredd "Your Next Punk" t-shirt to work without getting demoted to assistant pot-plant waterer!!!!

RHONDA EUDALY, contrary to sometimes popular belief, does have a life which revolves around things other than The A-Team, Star Trek, Babylon 5, and Nash Bridges (among others). As a (mostly aspiring) stage, screen, and print writer, and holding down a quasi-permanent job in radio, she is seen as a fairly unusual person. At least her cat, Dixon, thinks so, as do many of her friends. She enjoys the support of friends and family, and Nicole's indulgences of humor and multitudinous e-mails, without which, none of this would be possible. Her great desire is to entertain and to be Stephen J. Cannell when she grows up.

NATASHA MCKEE is currently a first-year college student majoring in architecture and hopes to one day work in the field of historic preservation. To say that she loves the Star Wars trilogy is a tremendous understatement (she especially loves the novels.) Aside from writing stories (for which many include names of her friends), she likes to draw, paint, learn foreign languages (she knows five and speaks three fluently), watch episodes of Star Trek (all for series) and has only recently gotten into watching Babylon 5 and Battlestar Galactica.

LAURA MICHAELS is a software engineer and has a BS in Electrical Engineering. Her favorite TV show is Star Trek (the original), and her favorite author is Brian Daley. She enjoys writing A-Team, Battlestar Galactica, Highlander, Star Wars and cross universe fiction.

NICOLE N. PELLEGRINI figures you probably don't want to know anything more about her. She has pretty much given up any pretense of being a productive and useful member of society, and would like the key to the room next to Murdock's at the V.A., please. Or better yet, to the key to Murdock's room. She'll behave herself. Honest.

IRENE SNYDER SCHWARTING is a graduate student in psychology, who has decided that after winning the Nobel prize for her dissertation research, she is going to get a much more profitable and rewarding job in the psychiatric ward at the Los Angeles VA Hospital. Until the Nobel committee meets, however, she continues to spend her days slaving over a hot computer, and venting her creative energies by writing fan-fiction in tribute to one of the greatest adventure shows of all time.

NANCY-LYNN M. WILSON has been a closet A-Team fan since the show aired. It has just been within the last 18 months that she has revealed her love for the show to her husband and to the people on the mailing list. She had never written a story before but has found that she enjoys writing as long as it is on topics of interest (The A-Team or The X-Files). In her spare time, she tests computers for NCR, runs around after 3 children (ages 5, 3, & 1), rides her horse, and supports her husband's comic book and Marvel superhero vinyl model kit addictions.